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BALLADS OF IRISH CHIVALRY

BALLADS OF IRISH CHIVALRY

BY

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DUBLIN
THE TALBOT PRESS LIMITED
89 TALBOT STREET

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CONTENTS AND INDEX.

[The names of the pieces are in Roman letters : all other entries are in *Italics.*]

Adieu, Lovely Mary, 175.
Affane in Waterford, 41.
 After the Battle, 46.
Ahasullus in Glenanaar, 120.
Aherlow, Glen of, 82.
 Along with my Love I'll go, 146.
Anner riv., 37, 205.
Antrim, 69.
Araglin riv., 106.
Ardfinnan on the Suir, 54.
Ardpatrick, Co. Limk., 6, 102, 119, 131, 152.
 Asthoreen Mochree, 73.
Aubeg or Mulla Riv. The, 42, 99.
Avonmore, the Blackwater, 47, 106.

Beal Fires, 192.
Bagenal, Sir Henry, 57.
Ballagh-a-thloo, at Clonodfoy, 132.
Ballingaddy near Kilmallock, 63.
Ballyhoura Mts., 42, 99, 128, 165, 210.
Ballynahown near Ardpatrick, 63.
Ballyneety near Limk. Junct., 11, 20, 212.
Ballyorgan in Limk., 132, 133.
Baltimore in Cork, 149.
 Banks of Anner, The, 205.
Banshee, a fairy mourner, 73, 182, 184.
Bantry in W. Cork, 119.
Barna, i.e. Barnageeha, g. v.
Barnaderg or Redchair, 89.
Barnageeha Hill, 134.
 Barnalee, The Watchfire of, 27, 46.
Barnewell, Lord Trimbleston's son, 1.
 Baron and the Miller, The, 48.
Barrys of Cork, The, 106, 153.
 Battle of Benburb, 56.
 Battle of Killeely, 78.
 Battle of the Raven's Glen, 119.
Beare, barony in W. Cork, 119.
Bearkaven in W. Cork, 121.
 Before the battle, 27.

Benburb, Battle of, 56.
Benn Gar in the Galtys, 37, 83, 171.
Black Abbey in Kilkenny, 173.
Black Cathleen, the "Wise Woman," 28, 31.
 Black Robber, The, 62, 63.
Blackrock Mt. in Limk., 102, 103, 119.
 Blacksmith of Limerick, The, 21.
Blackwater in Munster, The, 47, 106, 201.
Blackwater in Ulster, The, 56.
 Blind Girl of Glenore, The, 108.
 Boys of Wexford, The, 96.
Brandenburgh regiment, 21.
Brefney in Leitrim, 154.
Bregoge riv., 100, 120, 128.
Bride riv., 140.
 Bridge of Glanwillan, The, 201.
Brigade, The Irish, 147, 174, 177.
 Brigade's Hurling Match, The, 177.
Brosna riv. in Westmeath, 1.
Bruff, Co. Limerick, 131, 151.
 Burke, Thomas, 78.
 Burning of Kilcolman, The, 128.
Butlers of Ormond, The, 38.
Buttevant, Co. Cork, 104, 128, 131.

Callan riv. near Armagh, 57.
Camoge riv. in Limk., 79.
Candles in Windows at Night, 25, 200.
 Cannon, The, 195.
Carrick-on-Suir, 37.
Carriganoura, Cragmour, Castle, 61.
Carrigcleena near Mallow, 32, 47, 126, 127.
Carrigeennamronety Mt., 81, 89.
Carron Mt. : see Corrin.
Carrow riv. near Croom, 122.
Castlehaven, Lord, 166.
Castle Hill over Clonodfoy, 131.
Castlemaine in Kerry, 122.
Castle Oliver near Kilfinane, 132.

- Castlepook near Doneraile*, 100, 101.
Cathleen, Black, the "Wise Woman," 31.
Charleville, Co. Cork, 99, 128.
Clann Baskin, 120.
Clann Morna, 120.
Cleena the fairy queen, 28, 30, 32, 126, 127, 150.
Clodiagh riv. in Waterford, 179.
Cloghleigh Castle, 166.
Clonodfoy near Kilfinane, 131, 132, 133.
Coach Road at Castle Oliver, 132.
Cock and the Sparrow, The, 61.
Coming Bridal, The, 191.
Commoge riv., 79.
Condons, The, 61, 106, 166.
Coonagh in Limerick, 78.
Corrin, Corrinmore, Carron, 81, 128, 129.
Coumsea Mt. in Waterford, 190.
Counshingawn in Waterford, 190.
Coyne and Livery, 40.
Crag Eevill or Craglea, 14.
Croom or Crom in Limk., 47, 123, 137.
Cullen near Limk. Junct., 11, 212.
Cummeragh Mts., 49, 157, 161.
Curragh, a wicker-boat, 154.

Dark Gilliemore, Ballad of, 37.
Darra, 60, 74, 81, 121, 131: see *Glendarra*.
De Burgo, 78: see *Burke*.
Decies in Waterford, 39.
Deena Shee, fairies, 180.
Derrinlaur near Clonmel, 40.
De Rupè, now Roche (which see): 106. See the ballad of *Young De Rupè*.
Desmond, Earls of, 38, 54, 123.
Diarmid Mór, 147.
Donall, Sir, 99.
Doneraile in Cork, 76, 99, 100.
Donn, the fairy king, 28.
Doon Castle in Kerry, near Bally-bunion, 111.
Drynan Dhun, The, 25.
Duarrigle near Kanturk, 104.
Dun Grod near Galbally, 82.
Dunnaalong Castle, 149.
Dying Ballad-Singer, The, 59.

Earl Gerald and his Bride, 28.
Easmore Waterfall, 8, 62, 65, 102, 103.
Eevin or Eevill, the fairy queen of Craglea, 14.
Eileen of the golden hair, 193.

Eileen's Lament for Gerald, 47.
Enchanted War-horse, The, 111.
Eveleen, 110.

Fairies, 111, 132, 180.
Fairies in raths, 26.
Fair Maidens' beauty will soon fade away, 69.
Fairy Mill, The, 76.
Fairy queen, The, 83. See *Cleena and Eevin*.
Fairy Wand, Romance of the, 82.
Feale riv., The, 150.
Fermoy, 100.
Fertullagh in Westmeath, 1.
Finneen O'Driscoll the Rover, 149.
First Night I was Married, The, 174.
FitzGerald's, The, 38, 139, 145.
Flame that burned so brightly, The, 24.
Folling, a mantle, 39.
Fontenoy, 195.
Forest Fairy, Song of the, 53.
Four Comrades, The, 27, 46, 179.
Funshion Riv., Co. Cork, 108, 109, 155, 166, 191.

Gairha river near Clonodfoy, 133.
Galloglass, 4, 101, 129.
Galloglases, The Two, 70.
Galloping O'Hogan, 12, 137.
Galloping O'Hogan, Song of, 137.
Galty Mts., 82.
Garrett, earl of Desmond, 38.
Garrett, the Great Earl of Desmond, or Garrod Earla, 16.
Geraldines: see FitzGerald's.
Glanagear at Killawillin, 202.
Glanwillan, 201.
Glanworth, Cork, 106, 108, 144, 155.
Glenagaddy near Kilfinane, 62.
Glenanaar, 19, 43, 76, 78, 81, 120, 193, 196, 201.
Glenanner near Clonmel, 37, 205.
Glenara, 81.
Glendarra, 45: see *Darra*.
Gleena near Ardpatrik, 152.
Glegarriff in Cork, 110, 153.
Glennaive at Ardpatrik, 131.
Glenore: see Glanworth.
Glenosheen in Co. Limk., 81, 99, 102, 103, 206.
Glenroe in Limk., 74, 200.
Golden Helmet, Romance of the, 157.
Golden Spurs, Romance of the, 139.
Gra gal Machree, 145.
Greendove and the Raven, The, 155.
Grena: see Lyre-na-Grena.
Gurma near Mitchelstown, 45.

Hallow Eve, 25, 35.
Happy Christmas Days long ago,
 The, 199.
Hobbeler, a horseman, 39.
Houra: see *Ballyhoura*.
How Sarsfield destroyed the siege
train, 11.
Hurling, the Game of, 177.

Imokilly in Cork, 139.
Inchiquin, Murrough O'Brien, earl
of, 166.
Irish Brigade, The, 147, 174.
I wish I sat by Grená's side, 162.

Johnny Dunlea, 65.
Joy-Bells, The, 198.

Keeper Hill near Limk., 11.
Kenmare Bay, 119.
Kern, 4, 101, 129.
Kilbehenny near Mitchelstown, 145.
Kilbrannon, 66.
Kilcolman Castle, 104, 128.
Kilcruig hill, 81.
Kilfinane, Co. Limk., 76, 81, 119,
 131.
Kilkenny, 171.
Killawillin in Cork, 201.
Kilmallock, 78, 89, 101.
Kilmore near Mallow, 47, 110.
Kilnamullagh, 131: see *Buttevant*.
Kilteely, Battle of, 78.
Kimaultha Mt. near Limk., 11.
Kinmagown near Cullen, 11, 12.
Knockagarraunbaun: see *Castle*
Hill.
Knockanaffrin in Waterford, 182.
Knockbrone, 81, 89.
Knockea hill in Limk., 81, 89, 103.
Knockfierna hill, 28, 127.

Lady's Turn near Clonodfoy, 132.
Lady's Walk near Clonodfoy, 132.
Leitrim Castle, 154.
Light in Windows on Christmas
Eve and Hallow Eve, 25, 200.
Limerick, 11, 211.
Linnnet, The, 197.
Limerick, siege of, 11, 211.
Little Red Rath, The, 131.
Little Thomas, 54.
Lombardy, 177.
Long Mountain in Limk., 133.
Loobagh riv. at Kilmallock, 101.
Lord Lucan: see *Sarsfield*.
Lough Bo near Glenosheen, 133.
Lough Ennell in Westmeath, 1.
Lough Gur in Limk., 16, 102.

Lusmore, foxglove, 67, 112.
Lyons family of Cork, 123.
Lyr-na-Grena, 102, 103, 162, 211.
Lyre-na-Freaghaua, 102, 103, 119,
 211.

Maigue riv. in Limk., 47, 122, 123,
 136, 137.
Maine riv. in Kerry, 57.
Mairgréad Bán, 74.
Mallow, 78, 125.
Manning Ford, Battle of, 166.
Margaret, 162.
Maud of Desmond, 122.
Mee-na-malla, honeymoon, 199.
Merry Christmas Fire, The, 156.
Mitchelstown Cavern, The, 82.
Mizen Head in Cork, 150.
Molaga near Kildorrery, 108, 156.
Moneen, a kind of jig, 117.
Monroe, General, 56, 58.
Mountains High, The, 143.
Mournful Squire, Ballad of the, 37.
Mulla or Aubeg riv., 42, 99, 100.
Mumhan, Munster, 63.
My first love, 67.
Myles O'Reilly the Slasher, 57.

Nagles' Mts. in Cork, 202.
New-mown Hay, The, 92.
Nier Riv. near Clonmel, 27.
Noneen riv. near Ardpatrick, 63.
Norris, Sir Thomas, 78.
North Cork Militia, 10.

Oaks of Houra, The, 210.
O'Brien, Murrough, the Burner, 166.
O'Connor, Owneve Oge, of Offaly, 1.
O'Driscolls, The, 149.
O, fair shines the sun on Glenara,
 196.
Offaly in Kildare, 1.
Ogeen (Glenanaar) riv., 99, 120.
O'Grady, Dr. Standish H., 133.
O'Hogan, Galloping, 12, 137.
O'Hogan, Galloping, Song of, 137.
O'Keeffes, The, 104.
Old love and the new love, The, 9.
Oliver's Folly near Clonodfoy, 131.
O'Neill, Owen Roe, 56.
O'Reilly, Myles, the Slasher, 57.
Ormond, Earl of, 37, 38.
O'Ruarks, The, 154.
O'Sullivan Beare, 119.
O'Sullivan's Retreat, 153.
Oulart in Wexford, 10.
Ounanaar, the Glenanaar Riv., 19,
 43, 76, 99, 103, 105, 120.
Ounnageeragh riv., 102, 103, 135.

Pale, The, round Dublin, 70.
Pilgrim, The, 93.
Plantations, The, 144.
Pooka, The, 100.
Portland on the Shannon, 154.
Poulaflaikin, Poulaflaheen, 102, 103, 120.

Quicken Tree or Rowan Tree, 29.

Raheenroe at Clonodfoy, 131.
Rapparees, 144.
Rapparee's horse and sword, The, 150.
Rathgoggan: see *Charleville*.
Raths haunted by fairies, 26.
Raven's Glen, Battle of the, 119.
Raven's skull, draught from, 31.
Redchair or Barnaderg, 89.
Red Hand of Ulster, 58.
Red Rath: see *Raheenroe*.
Red rose and the white, The, 125.
Riddera Fionn or White Knight, 145.
Roche, family of, 170.
Romance of the Fairy Wand, 82.
Romance of the Golden Helmet, 157.
Romance of the Golden Spurs, 139.
Romance of the Stone Coffin, 89.
Roving Brian O'Connell, 163.
Rowan or Quicken Tree, 29.

Saint Anne's Well near Ardpatrick, 63.
Saint Stephen's Night, 194.
Samuin: see *Hallow Eve*.
Sappho, 198.
Sarsfield destroys the siege train, 11.
Sarsfield's Rock, 11.
Sarsfield's Trooper, Song of, 211.
Seeftin Mt. in Limk., 81, 102, 103, 200.
Seneschals of Imokilly, 139.
Seóimra Nora at Knockbrone, 89.
Sheehan, Very Rev. Dr., P.P., 76, 177.
Sherkin Isl. near Cape Clear, 149.
Sir Donall, 99.

Slieve Felim Mts., 11, 212.
Slievenamon in Tipperary, 205.
Slievenamuck Mt., 82.
Song of Galloping O'Hogan, 137.
Song of Sarsfield's Trooper, 211.
Song of the Forest Fairy, 53.
Song of Trén the fairy, 87.
Spalpeen, The, 116.
Spenser, Edmund, poet, 100, 128, 129.
Spoutmoor: see *Easmore*.
Stone Coffin, Romance of the, 89.
Stormy Sea shall flow in, The, 138.
Suir river, The, 172, 205.
Sunny Gleneigh, 152.

Tar river near Clonmel, 37.
Templemolaga in Cork, 108.
Thomas the Black, earl of Ormond, 38.
Tirnanoge, the pagan heaven, 82.
To a Bird, 209.
Tories, The, 144.
Trén the Fairy, Song of, 87.
Turlaggan, now Tooraleagan, near Mitchelstown, 45.
Two Galloglasses, The, 70.
Tyrrell, Captain, of Fertullagh, 1.
Tyrrell's Pass, Battle of, 1.

Vavasour, Sir Charles, 166.
Vinegar Hill in Wexford, 98.

Wanderer, The, 165.
Watchfire of Barnalee, The, 27.
Waterfall, The, 207.
Well of the Omen, The, 6.
White Knight, The, 145.
White Ladye, The, 131.
Wilderness, The, at Clonodfoy, 133.
Wild Geese, The, 174.
Will of Glenore, 144.
William III., King, 11.

Yellow Ford, Battle of the, 57.
Young De Rupé, 170. See *De Rupé*.
You're a dear land to me, 206.

BALLADS OF IRISH CHIVALRY.

TYRRELL'S PASS.

In 1597, during the O'Neill war, young Barnewell, son of Lord Trimbleston, marched south from Mullingar with 1000 men to crush the small Irish army of 400 under Captain Tyrrell, an active and able leader, chief of Fertullagh in Westmeath. Tyrrell intercepted him at Tyrrell's Pass in the south of Westmeath, then a long narrow firm passage, with bogs and brushwood on both sides. He placed half of his little army in ambush at the Mullingar end of the pass, under Owney Oge O'Connor chief of Offaly in Kildare: then retreating before Barnewell, he drew him on through the pass till he had caught him between the two detachments. At the proper moment O'Connor sounded the signal ("The Tyrrells' March" on the bagpipes), when Tyrrell suddenly turned round, and Barnewell was attacked front and rear. His army was annihilated, and he himself was taken prisoner.

Lough Ennell and the river Brosna are near Tyrrell's Pass.

I.

By the flow'ry banks of Brosna the burning sunset fell
In many a beam and golden gleam on hill and mead and
dell;
And from thy shores, bright Ennell. to the far-off mountain
crest,
Over plain and leafy wild wood there was peace and quiet
rest.
Brave Tyrrell sat that summer eve amid the woody hills,
With Captain Owney at his side by Brosna's shining
rills—

B

Brave Tyrrell of the flying camps and Owney Oge the
 strong,
 And round them lay their followers the forest glade
 along ;
 Four hundred men of proof they were, those warriors
 free and bold ;
 In many a group they sat around the green skirts of the
 wold.

II.

The sun had set upon their camp, the stars were burning
 bright,
 All save the Chief and Owney Oge were sleeping in their
 light ;
 And they sat downward where the stream was singing its
 deep song,
 Planning fierce raid and foray bold that starry twilight
 long.
 "By my good faith," said Tyrrell, "for days we've
 wandered wide,
 And on no foe, still, high or low, our good swords have
 we tried ;
 There's many a keep around us here, and many a traitor
 town,
 And we should have a town or keep ere another sun goes
 down."
 Answered Owney :—"Or may fortune send young Barne-
 well's forces here :
 A pleasant fight in the cool of night for me in the
 starlight clear !"

III.

Sudden they ceased, and to their feet both warriors
 instant sprang,
 And down the little streamlet's bed their challenge
 fiercely rang :

They'd heard a sound beside the stream, as if some forest
bird,
Awak'ning from his nightly dreams amid the leaves, had
stirred.
A password: then a stealthy step like a wolf from out his
lair,
And their trusty spy of the falcon eye stood right before
them there.
"Young Barnewell, with a thousand men, high boasting
at their head,
Will find ye here in these green glades at morning light,"
he said;
Then vanished silent as he came beneath the forest shade,
And the clank of sabres followed him on his pathway
through the glade.

IV.

For his comrades at their leader's call beside the
streamlet's bank
Were filing from their ferny beds in many a serried rank;
And now along their ordered lines Fertullagh's accents
came:—
"The foeman through our native fields speeds down with
sword and flame:
We'll meet him as we ever did; and though we are but
few,
We'll meet him in the eastward pass, and give him
welcome due!"
They gained that pass when morning leapt above the
eastern wave,
And half his men to Owney Oge the hardy chieftain
gave:
"Now lie ye here in ambush close while we retreat
below,
And when the last of the band have passed we'll spring
upon the foe!"

V.

There came no sound from those ambushed men as they
crouched among the fern,
But the deep breath of the galloglass,* or whispering of
the kern ;
The light breeze rustling through the boughs in the leafy
woods all round ;
The chirp and song of the busy birds : was heard no other
sound.
And now along the misty plain shone out the morning ray
On Barnewell's bright and serried files all burning for the
fray ;
A thousand valiant men they were from Meath's broad
fertile plain,
And when they saw Fertullagh's files they cried, in high
disdain—
“ Two hundred men to stem our charge ! We'll scatter
them like chaff ! ”
Then poured them through that perilous pass with mocking
cheer and laugh.

VI.

Now Tyrrell flies ; but turns when he hears “ The
Tyrrells' March ” ring out :
He answers with the trumpet note and the galloglasses'
shout.
The startled wolf leaps from his lair : “ Croak, croak,”
cry the ravens hoarse ;
“ We'll soon have food for each hungry brood—the rider
and the horse.”

* Galloglass, a heavy-armed foot-soldier. Kern, a light-armed foot-soldier. The galloglasses were large-limbed and fierce, and were noted for their fatal dexterity in the use of the battle-axe.

And out like wolves from the forest gloom on a close-
packed herd of deer,
Two hundred ran on the foeman's van, two hundred on the
rear :
The kern go darting right and left, with their guns and
gleaming pikes,—
Woe worth the day for the struggling foe where'er their
weapon strikes :
The giant galloglass strides down with vengeance in his
eye,
Wild yelling out his charging shout like a thunder-clap on
high.

VII.

Now in the narrow open pass the battle rolls along ;
Now 'mid the bogs and woods each side the fighting
warriors throng ;
As hounds around a hunted wolf some forest rock beneath,
Whence comes no sound save the mortal rush and the
gnash of many teeth,
'Their charging shouts die gradual down—no sound rolls
outwards save
The volley of the fatal gun, and the crash of axe and
glaive.
O, life it is a precious gem, yet many there will throw
The gem away in that mortal fray for vengeance on their
foe.
In deadly silence still they fight, till the pass is covered
wide
With war-steeds strong, and soldiers slain, and many a
gory tide.

VIII.

Hurrah ! that shout it rolleth out with cadence wild and
stern ;
'Tis the triumph roar of the galloglass, and the fierce yell
of the kern

The foeman flies before their steel—but not for far he
flies—
In the narrow pass, in the bogs and scrubs on either side,
he dies.
Where'er he speeds death follows him like a shadow in
his tracks—
He meets the gleam of the fearful pike and the murderous
battle-axe.
Young Barnewell was made prisoner fighting bravely in
the van,
And his comrades all fell slain around him—save one
single man :
That man they sped, and away he fled, unharmed by
galloglass,
That he might tell how his comrades fell that morn at
Tyrrell's Pass.

THE WELL OF THE OMEN.

Ardpatrick, a green hill, two miles west of Kilfinane, Co. Limerick, with a venerable abbey ruin, and an extensive churchyard on the top (see "The White Lady" farther on). "The Well of the Omen" ("St. Patrick's Well") is a perpendicular open shaft near the ruin, a yard in diameter and about 12 feet deep, with water at the bottom, originally constructed—more than a thousand years ago—to supply the community of monks with water, long before the enclosure was turned into a graveyard. This deep well is still there, but some rubbish has fallen down, and the water is no longer visible. The legend of the shadows, as told in the second verse, was current round Ardpatrick in and before the early part of the last century.

I.

At morn up green Ard-Patrick the Sunday bell rang
clear,
And downward came the peasants with looks of merry
cheer,

With many a youth and maiden by pathways green and fair,
To hear the Mass devoutly and say the Sunday prayer;
And the meadows shone around them while the skylarks
gay were singing,
And the stream sang songs amid the flowers and the
Sunday bell was ringing.

II.

There is a well sunk deeply by old Ard-Patrick's wall;
Within it gaze the peasants to see what may befall:
Who see their shadows down below, they will have merry
cheer;
Who see not any shadows shall die within the year.*
There staid the youths and maidens where the soft green
grass was springing,
While the stream sang songs amid the flowers and the
Sunday bell was ringing.

III.

Out spoke bold Rickard Hanlon: "We'll see what may
befall,"—
'Twas to young Bride Mac Donnell the flower among
them all,—
"Come see if ours be sorrow or merry wedlock's band!"
Then took the smiling maiden all by the lily hand;
And there they knelt together, their bright looks down-
ward flinging,
While the stream sang songs amid the flowers and the
Sunday bell was ringing.

IV.

They looked into the water, but no shadows saw below:
The dark dark sign of evil! Ah, could it e'er be so?

* I often, when a boy, looked down and always saw my own shadow.—P. W. J.

Full lightly laughed young Rickard although his heart
 was chill,
 And with fair Bride Mac Donnell and all went down the
 hill,
 To hear the Mass devoutly, with the soft airs round them
 winging,
 While the stream sang songs amid the flowers and the
 Sunday bell was ringing.

V.

Sweet months, despite the omen, in sunny bliss flew o'er,
 And sometimes thinking on it but made them love the
 more ;
 But when across Ard-Patrick they sought the lowland
 plain,
 Into the well's deep water they never looked again ;
 Far off with their companions they sat, fair garlands
 stringing,
 While the stream sang songs amid the flowers and the
 Sunday bell was ringing.

.

VI.

Dismay through all our hamlet when the storm and flood
 were o'er !
 The ford's great rocks were loosened by the torrent of
 Easmore,*
 And clasping hands together—sad sad the tale to tell—
 Were found young Bride and Rickard drowned near the
 Robber's Well !
 O, false and cruel water, so merry downward flinging,
 How canst thou sing amid the flowers while the death
 bell loud is ringing ?

* Easmore [pron. Assmore], a waterfall on one of the torrents
 flowing down from Blackrock. For this fall, and for the
 "Robber's Well," see "The Black Robber" farther on.

VII.

From old Ard-Patrick's ruins loud sounds the piercing
 keen;*
 By the sad Well of the Omen a deep deep grave is seen,
 Where side by side together they have laid the early
 dead,
 And the Mass they've chanted o'er them, and the requiem
 prayer is said.
 There was woe and bootless sorrow in many a bosom
 clinging,
 But the stream sang songs amid the flowers, while the
 death bell loud was ringing!

 THE OLD LOVE AND THE NEW LOVE.

AIR: "Royal Charlie."†

I.

I SAT within the valley green,
 I sat me with my true love,
 My sad heart strove the two between,
 The old love and the new love;—
 The old for her, the new that made
 Me think on Ireland dearly;
 While soft the wind blew down the glade
 And shook the golden barley.

II.

'Twas hard the mournful words to frame,
 To break the ties that bound us,—
 'Twas harder still to bear the shame
 Of foreign chains around us;

* Keen, a lament.

† For which see Graves's Irish Song Book, page 70.

And so I said, "The mountain glen
I'll seek next morning early,
And join the brave United men":
While soft winds shook the barley.

III.

While sad I kissed away her tears,
My arms around her flinging,
The foeman's shot burst on our ears,
From out the wild wood ringing.
The bullet pierced my true love's side,
In life's young spring so early,
And there upon my breast she died,
While soft winds shook the barley.

IV.

I bore her to the wild wood screen ;
And many a summer blossom
I placed, with branches soft and green,
Above her gore-stained bosom :
I wept and kissed her pale pale cheek,
Then rushed o'er vale and far lea,
My vengeance on the foe to wreak,
While soft winds shook the barley.

V.

And blood for blood, without remorse,
I've tak'n at Oulart Hollow,*
While mourners placed my true love's corse
Where I full soon will follow ;
Around her grave I wander drear,
Noon, night, and morning early,
With breaking heart, whene'er I hear
The wind that shakes the barley.

* Oulart in Wexford, where, in 1798, a party of the cruel North Cork Militia were annihilated by the exasperated rebels.

HOW SARSFIELD DESTROYED THE SIEGE
TRAIN.

In August, 1690, King William III laid siege to Limerick, which was defended by Sarsfield (Lord Lucan) and the Governor Boileau. His siege train of great cannons and ammunition to batter down wall and city was on its way from Dublin, guarded by a convoy of two troops of horse. When Sarsfield received intelligence of this, he at once took 500 picked horsemen and quietly crossed Thomond Bridge into Clare* on the night of Sunday, 10th August: galloped northwards and crossed the Shannon into Tipperary by a deep and dangerous ford above Killaloe; and as morning approached halted on the northern base of Kimaultha or Keeper Hill, a lofty mountain fifteen miles in a direct line from Limerick. Monday morning they moved leisurely round Kimaultha, and turning southwards, rested in the glens at the eastern extremity of Slieve Felim mountains. Towards nightfall on that day—Monday—Sarsfield's scouts brought word that the convoy were preparing to encamp beside Ballyneety. The old castle of Ballyneety stood on the summit of a rock, then called Kinmagown (MacGowan's hill), but since known as "Sarsfield's Rock," two miles from the village of Cullen, near Limerick Junction Railway Station.

At midnight they set out southwards for a ride of about twelve miles across country in the moonlight; and passing through Cullen came on the encampment about 2 o'clock in the morning, taking the whole party by surprise. What followed is told with sufficient clearness and detail in the ballad.

The next ballad (p. 21) will tell the result of the attempt to storm the city.†

Stories of Sarsfield's exploit are current among the people of

* King William's army was altogether on the Limerick side of the Shannon.

† A full account of the siege of Limerick, with the capture and destruction of William's siege train by Sarsfield, will be found in Joyce's *Child's History of Ireland*, or Joyce's *Concise History of Ireland*.

Limerick and Tipperary to this day: and it is sometimes mentioned in their folk songs. For instance, one of these songs has this striking verse:—

“We marched with bold Lord Lucan before the break of day,
Until we came to Kinmagown where the artillery lay;
Then God He cleared the firmament, the moon and stars gave light,
And for the Battle of the Boyne we had revenge that night!”*

According to tradition Sarsfield was guided all through by a celebrated rapparee leader of the time, commonly called Galloping O'Hogan. The ballad does not depart materially from the historical and traditional accounts; and it is correct in its topography. At the opening, O'Hogan is represented as addressing Johnnie Moran, one of his followers.

Part the First.

I.

“COME up to the hill, Johnnie Moran, and the de'il's in
the sight you will see;
King William's stout men in the lowlands are marching
o'er valley and lea;
Brave cannon they bring for their warfare, good powder
and bullets galore,
To batter the grey walls of Limerick adown by the deep
Shannon shore.”

II.

They girded their corslets and sabres that morning so
glorious and still,
They leapt like good men to their saddles, and took the
lone path to the hill;
And they swept through the ferns and the heather as on
towards the upland they prest,
Till at length they alighted—crouched down—and peered
warily over the crest.

* See “Song of Sarsfield's Trooper” at the end.

III.

“Look down to the east, Johnnie Moran, where the
wings of the morning are spread ;
Each basnet you see in the sunlight it gleams on an
enemy’s head ;
Look down on their long line of baggage, their huge
guns of iron and brass,
That, as sure as my name is O’Hogan, will never to
Limerick pass.

IV.

“Spur, then, to the foot of Kimaultha—see Ned of the
Hill on your way—
Have all the brave boys at the muster by Carna at close
of the day ;
I’ll ride off for Sarsfield to Limerick and tell what we’ve
seen from the hill ;
And if Sarsfield won’t capture their cannon, by the Cross
of Kildare but we will !”

V.

Away to the north went young Johnnie like an arbalest
bolt in his speed,
Away to the west bold O’Hogan gives bridle and spur to
his steed ;
Through the swift highland river he dashes, down the
heather-clad moorland amain,
Till he biddeth farewell to the uplands and speeds o’er
the broad grassy plain.

VI.

You’d search from the grey Rock of Cashel each side to
the blue ocean’s rim,
Through green dale and hamlet and city, but you’d ne’er
find a horseman like him ;
With his foot as if grown to the stirrup, his knee with
its rooted hold ta’en,
With his seat in the saddle so graceful and his sure hand
so light on the rein.

VII.

As the cloud-shadow skims o'er the meadows when the
fleet-wingéd summer winds blow,
By war-wasted castle and village and streamlet and crag
doth he go ;
The foam-flakes drop quick from his charger, yet never a
bridle draws he,
Till he baits in the hot blazing noontide by the cool fairy
well of Lisbwee.

VIII.

He rubbed down his good charger fondly, the dry grass
he heaped for its food,
A crust for himself and a cress, with a drink of the sweet
crystal flood ;
And he's up in the saddle and flying o'er woodlands and
broad fields once more,
Till the sand 'neath the hoofs of his charger is crunched
by the wide Shannon's shore.

IX.

For never a ford did he linger but swam his brave steed
right across ;*
It clomb up the bank like a wolf-dog, then dashed over
meadow and moss ;
The shepherds who looked from the upland, they crossed
themselves thrice as he passed,
And they said 'twas a sprite from Crag Eevill† went by on
the wings of the blast.

* He crossed far above Limerick to avoid the besiegers' scouts and outposts.

† Crag Eevill, now Craglea, a rocky hill over the south end of Lough Derg at the Clare side, near Killaloe, where the fairy queen Eevinn or Eevill had her palace.

Part the Second.

X.

A summons from William to Limerick—a summons to
open their gate,
Their fortress and stores to surrender, else the sword and
the gun were their fate.
Brave Sarsfield he answered the summons: "Though all
holy Ireland in flames
Blazed up to the skies to consume us, we'll hold the good
town for King James!"

XI.

When the answer was brought to King William, in his
anger he vowed and he swore
That he'd bury the town, ere he'd leave it, in grim fiery
ruin and gore;
From black Cromwell's Fort with his cannon he hammered
it well all the day,
And he wished for his huge guns to back him, that were
yet moving slow far away.

XII.

The soft vesper bell from St. Mary's tolled out in the
calm sunset air,
As Sarsfield stood high on the rampart and looked o'er
the green fields of Clare;
And anon from the copses of Cratloe a flash to his keen
eyes there came;
'Twas the spike of O'Hogan's bright basnet glistening
forth in the red sunset flame.

XIII.

Then down came the galloping horseman with the speed
of a culverin ball,
And he reined up his foam-fleckéd charger with a gallant
gambade by the wall;

With his eyes he searched tower, fosse, and rampart—
they lay all securely and still;
And then to the bold Lord of Lucan he told what he'd
seen from the hill.

XIV.

The good steed he rests in the stable, the bold rider feasts
at the board,
But the gay laughing revel once ended, he'll soon have a
feast for his sword;
And now he looks out at the window where the moon-
beams shine pale on the square,
For Sarsfield, full dight in his harness, with five hundred
bold troopers is there.

XV.

He's mounted his steed in the moonlight and away from
the North Gate they go,
Where the woods cast their black spectral shadows and
the streams with their lone voices flow;
The peasants awoke from their slumbers, when they heard
them sweep by through the glen,
And they thought 'twas the great Garrod Earla* rushing
past from Lough Gur with his men.

XVI.

The grey ghostly midnight was round them, the banks
they were rocky and steep;
A hoarse roar came up from the Shannon, for the huge
stream was rapid and deep;

* Garret, the Great Earl of Desmond, who is still believed by the peasantry to come forth from his enchanted cave beside Lough Gur in Limerick, on the St. John's Eve of every seventh year, and sweep, at the head of his mail-clad barons and knights, through the surrounding country. (For this Great Earl, see Joyce's History of Ireland at A.D. 1467.)

But the bold Lord of Lucan dashed downwards, he asked
for no light save the moon's,
And he's forded the broad lordly Shannon with his
galloping guide and dragoons.

XVII.

The star of the morning out glimmered as fast by Lisearley
they rode,
As they swept round the base of Kimaultha the sun on
their bright helmets glowed.
Now the steeds in a valley are grazing while the riders
repose by the rill,
And Sarsfield peers out like an eagle on the low-lying
plain from the hill.

Part the Third.

XVIII.

O'Hogan is down in the lowlands, a watch on the track of
the foe ;
Johnnie Moran from Carna is marching, that his men be
in time for a blow ;
All day from the slope of Slieve Felim, the tall Lord of
Lucan looks down
On the roads where the train of King William on its slow
march of danger is bowne.

XIX.

The red sunset died in the heavens ; night fell over
mountain and shore ;
The moon shed her light on the valleys, and the stars
glimmered brightly once more ;
Then Sarsfield sprang up from the heather, for a horse
tramp he heard on the waste,—
'Twas O'Hogan, the black mountain sweeping, like a
spectre of night in his haste.

XX.

“Lord Lucan, they’ve camped on the heather beside
 Ballyneety’s grey tower ;
 I have found out the path to fall on them as they sleep in
 the still midnight hour ;
 They have powder, pontoons, and great cannons—*dhar*
dhee,* those huge cannons are bright ;
 They have treasure galore for the taking, and their pass-
 word is ‘ Sarsfield ’ to-night !”

XXI.

The stars of the midnight were shining when the sleeping
 dragoons got the word ;
 Each sprang with one bound to his saddle and looked to
 his pistols and sword ;
 And away down Slieve Felim’s broad valleys the guide
 and bold Sarsfield are gone,
 While the long stream of helmets behind them in the
 cold moonlight glimmered and shone.

XXII.

They paused not for loud brawling river, they looked not
 for togher† or path,
 They swept up the long street of Cullen with the speed
 of the storm in its wrath :
 When at length on the verge of the camp—“Give the
 password !” rang out on their van,
 Exultant the answer came :—“Sarsfield’s the password
 and Sarsfield’s the man !”‡

* *Dhar Dee*, an oath—Irish *Dar Dia*.

† Togher, an artificial causeway over a bog or marsh.

‡ The exact reply as recorded in history. One of Sarsfield’s
 scouts had found out that the password for the night was
 “Sarsfield.”

XXIII.

And Sarsfield rode on with his troop like a torrent
 through Ounanaar's* glen,
 And down on the enemy's convoy, who stood to their
 cannons like men,
 With a sudden and loud-ringing war-cry that wakened
 night's echoes they crashed,
 And with sabre and pistol drawn ready through the midst
 of th' encampment they dashed.

XXIV.

They have conquered and scattered the convoy; they've
 captured King William's great train,
 And they laugh as they look on the spoil for they'll ne'er
 see such wonders again;
 Those guns with one loud-roaring volley might batter a
 strong mountain down:
Wirrasthru† for its gallant defenders if they e'er came to
 Limerick town!

XXV.

They filled them and rammed them with powder, they
 turned down their mouths in the clay,
 The dry powder casks they piled round them, the baggage
 above did they lay;
 A fuse-train they laid to the powder, afar to the green-
 wood out thrown:
 "Now give it the match," cried Lord Lucan, "and an
 earthquake we'll have of our own!"

* Ounanaar, the river flowing through Glenanaar, in the Ballyhoura Mountains. See farther on "The Fairy Mill," and "Sir Donall."

† *Wirrasthru*, equivalent to "alas."

XXVI.

O'Hogan the quick fuse he lighted—a flash and a whiz—
then a glare
Of broad blinding brightness infernal blazed out on the
calm midnight air ;
An outburst of thunder volcanic to the bright stars of
heaven uptore,
And old Ballyneety's grey castle came down with a crash
at the roar.*

XXVII.

The firm earth it rocked and it trembled, the moon hid
her visage on high,
And the fragments of guns, carts, and tumbrils showered
flaming around through the sky ;
The fierce sound o'er highland and valley rolled on like
the dread earthquake's tramp,
And it wakened the distant besiegers as they slumbered
that night in their camp.

XXVIII.

Lord Lucan dashed back o'er the Shannon ere the bright
star of morning arose,
With his men through the North Gate he clattered,
unhurt and unseen by his foes :
Johnnie Moran rushed down from old Carna—not a foe
did he see for his blade,
But his men searched the camp in its ruin, and the de'il's
in the spoil that they made !

* The explosion split the old castle of Ballyneety, shivering one half in fragments to the ground. This old ruin has now almost disappeared.

THE BLACKSMITH OF LIMERICK.

During the attempt to storm Limerick (1690), the citizens—men and women—rushed forward in multitudes to aid their own soldiers, and seizing any weapons they could lay hands on, dashed into the midst of the smoke, dust, and uproar, and joined eagerly in the fray. By their assistance the attack was repulsed; after which—on the 31st August—the siege was raised.

While the dreadful conflict was going on in the streets the “Black Battery” blew up and destroyed a whole regiment of the besiegers—the Brandenburghers—who had taken possession of it after a bloody contest.

I.

He grasped his ponderous hammer—he could not stand
it more,
To hear the bombshells bursting and thundering battle’s
roar;
Said he, “The breach they’re mounting, the Dutchman’s
murdering crew:
I’ll try my hammer on their heads and see what *that* can
do.”

II.

“Now swarthy Ned and Moran, make up that iron well,
’Tis Sarsfield’s horse that wants the shoes, so mind not
shot or shell.”
“Ah, sure,” cried both, “the horse can wait, for Sars-
field’s on the wall,
And where you go we’ll follow, with you to stand or
fall.”

III.

The blacksmith raised his hammer and rushed into the
street,
His ’prentice boys behind him, the ruthless foe to meet:

High on the breach of Limerick with dauntless hearts
they stood,
Where bombshells burst, and shot fell thick, and redly
ran the blood.

IV.

“Now look you, brown-haired Moran, and mark you,
swarthy Ned,
This day we'll try the thickness of many a Dutchman's
head—
Hurrah! upon their bloody path they're mounting
gallantly;
And now the first that tops the breach, leave him to this
and me.”

V.

The first that gained the rampart he was a captain
brave,—
A captain of the grenadiers with blood-stained dirk and
glaive;
He pointed and he parried, but it was all in vain,
For right through skull and helmet the hammer found
his brain.

VI.

The next that topped the rampart he was a colonel bold,
Bright through the dust of battle his helmet flashed with
gold.
“Gold is no match for iron,” the doughty blacksmith
said,
As with that ponderous hammer he stretched the foeman
dead.

VII.

“Now here's for God and Limerick!” black Ned and
Moran cried,
As on the Dutchmen's leaden heads their hammers well
they plied.

A bombshell burst between them :—one fell without a groan ;
One leaped into the lurid air and down the breach was thrown.

VIII.

“ Brave smith ! brave smith ! ” cried Sarsfield, beware the treacherous mine :
Fall back, fall back on th’ instant, or death is surely thine ! ”
The smith sprang up the rampart and leaped the blood-stained wall,
As high into the shuddering air went foemen, fort, and all !

IX.

Up, like a red volcano they thundered wild and high—
Brave Brandenburghers, spears and guns and standards, to the sky ;
And dark and bloody was the shower that round the blacksmith fell ;
He thought upon his ’prentice boys—they were avengéd well.

X.

At that mighty roar a deadly silence instant settled down :
’Twas broken by a triumph shout that shook the ancient town :
Again its heroes forward dashed, and charged, and fought, and slew,
And taught King William and his men what Irish hearts could do.

XI.

Hurrah, for the brave defenders ! They’ve hurled the foemen back !
The blacksmith rushed on the flying ranks ; his hammer ne’er was slack.

He's tak'n a Holland captain beside the red pontoon,
And "wait you here," he sternly cries, "I'll send you
back full soon."

XII.

"Dost see this gory hammer? It cracked some skulls
to-day;
And yours 'twill crack if you don't stand and list to what
I say :—
Here, take it to King William straight, and you may tell
him too,
'Twould be acquainted with *his* skull, if he were here, not
you."

XIII.

The blacksmith sought his smithy and blew his bellows
strong;
He shod the steed of Sarsfield but o'er it sang no song.
"Ochone, my boys are dead," cried he; "their loss I'll
long deplore;
But comfort's in my heart—their graves are red with
foreign gore!"

THE FLAME THAT BURNED SO BRIGHTLY.

AIR: "Saddle the Pony." *

I.

THERE shone a light in a window pane,
Still burning brightly burning,
It gleamed afar o'er Cleena's main
On Donall's bark returning;
He gazed far up the cliffs between—
The hamlet glimmered nightly—
And he thought he saw his own Kathleen
By the flame that burned so brightly.

* For which see Joyce's "Old Irish Folk Music and Songs."

II.

It was upon All-Hallows night,
 When candles bright were burning,*
 That gleamed that clear and constant light
 On Donall's bark returning ;
 Like a star it lighted the darkening scene,
 It made his heart beat lightly,
 For he thought he saw his own Kathleen
 By the flame that burned so brightly.

III.

He moored his bark the hamlet near,
 Where bright the lights were burning ;
 But a wail fell sad on his startled ear,
 All-Hallows night returning ;
 He heard a name in that piercing keen,†
 He saw a shroud gleam whitely—
 'Twas the death-wake light of his own Kathleen,
 That flame that burned so brightly!

 THE DRYNÁN DHUN.‡

I.

By road and by river the wild birds sing ;
 O'er mountain and valley the dewy leaves spring ;
 The gay flowers are shining, gilt o'er by the sun :
 And fairest of all shines the Drynán Dhun.

* The people keep a candle lighting all night, shining out in the darkness through the window, on Hallow Eve, and also on Christmas Eve.

† Keen, a cry of lamentation.

‡ Drynán Dhun, the blackthorn or sloebush. For the air, see Joyce's "Old Irish Folk Music and Songs."

II.

The rath of the fairy,* the ruin hoar,
With white silver splendour it decks them all o'er ;
And down in the valleys where merry streams run,
How sweet smell the blossoms of the Drynán Dhun.

III.

Ah ! well I remember the soft spring day
I sat by my love 'neath its sweet-scented spray ;
The day that she told me her heart I had won,
Beneath the white blossoms of the Drynán Dhun.

IV.

The streams they were singing their gladsome song,
The soft winds were blowing the wild woods among,
The mountains shone bright in the red setting sun,
As we sat 'neath the blossoms of the Drynán Dhun.

V.

'Tis my prayer in the morning, my dream at night,
To sit thus again by my heart's dear delight,
With her blue eyes of gladness, her hair like the sun,
And her bright pleasant smile 'neath the Drynán Dhun.

* The old raths, lisses, forts, and moats are believed to be the haunt of fairies. See Joyce's *Social History of Ancient Ireland*, Index, "Rath."

THE FOUR COMRADES :
OR
THE WATCH-FIRE OF BARNALEE.
BEFORE THE BATTLE.

I.

THERE were four comrades stout and free,
Within the Wood of Barnalee,
Under the spreading oaken tree.

II.

The ragged clouds sailed past the moon ;
Loud rose the brawling torrent's croon ;
The rising winds howled in the wood
Like hungry wolves at scent of blood.
Yet there they sat in converse free,
Under the spreading oaken tree :—
Garrod the Minstrel with his lyre,
Sir Hugh le Poer that heart of fire,
Dark Gillimore the mournful squire,
And Donall from the banks of Nier.*

III.

Spectrally shone the watch-fire light
On their sun-browned faces and helmets bright,
Showing beneath the woodland glooms
Their swords and jacks and waving plumes ;

As there they sat, those comrades free,
Within the Wood of Barnalee,
Under the spreading oaken tree,
And told their tales to you and me.

* Nier, a small river near Clonmel, flowing from the Waterford side into the Suir. See Irish Names of Places, vol. ii., "Nier," in Index.

And first the Minstrel took his harp that oft
 Rang with War's clangorous music, fierce and free,
 And now with gentle touch and prelude soft,
 Began his strain of simple melody.
 Of love he sang—her love whose wavy sea*
 Shines round the sunny shores of Desmond's land,
 And as his voice arose, wild rhapsody
 Sparkled within his eyes, and music bland
 Flowed from the trembling wires beneath his master
 hand.

EARL GERALD AND HIS BRIDE.

There is a tradition that, some two or three centuries ago, a young Geraldine chief dropped dead in the ballroom while dancing at his own wedding. It was universally believed that he did not really die, but was carried off by Queen Cleena to her palace. The poor bride and her family employed a celebrated "Wise woman" of the county Clare, named *Caitilin Dubh*, "Black Cathleen," to bring him back from Queen Cleena. (But some versions say that it was Cathleen's daughter that went.) I have a copy—in Irish—of the conversation supposed to have taken place between Black Cathleen and Cleena. Some versions of the popular legend bring the affair to a happy issue; and these have been followed in the Ballad.

I.

T'is at Knockfierna's foot†—that haunted hill
 Where Donn the fairy king hath made his hall,
 A hall invisible to most, but still
 By wanderer sometimes seen at midnight fall,

* "Her love whose wavy sea," &c. Cleena, the fairy queen, from whom the sea round the south coast of Cork is called "Cleena's Wave." See p. 32, below. For Cleena see Joyce's *Social History of Ancient Ireland*. Desmond, South Munster.

† Knockfierna, near Croom in Limerick, a celebrated fairy hill. For Donn see Joyce's *Social History of Ancient Ireland*.

Rearing its crystal battlements, until

They seem to prop the skies with pillars tall—
There Eileen stands beside her Geraldine,
The topmost branch of Desmond's princely line.

II.

And Eileen looks upon her Gerald now,

Then points unto the crimson west. "And see
How quick," she says, "upon Knockferna's brow

Yon cloud of blackness groweth!" Presently
A fierce wind shaketh every forest bough

Save the light branches of the rowan-tree*
That shadows o'er their trysting-place; and there
No light leaf trembles in the troublous air.

III.

With lightnings on its front and thunder knell,

That black-faced cloud comes rolling down the steep,
And flings its sable darkness on the dell

Where stand the startled lovers: wild winds sweep
Far through the bending trees with savage yell;

Anon a lightning flash, and from the deep
Green bosom of the circling wood, a fawn,
Small, beautiful, and white, treads o'er the lawn.

IV.

The black cloud fades—'tis bright and still again,

The birds once more begin their evening tune;
But fear is in young Eileen's heart—she's fain

To seek her father's hall, for in the croon
Of the near rivulet she hears full plain

Weird fairy voices. Quick she starts, and soon
They're speeding to Kilmoodan's† towers below,
The white fawn close behind them as they go.

* Rowan-tree. The peasantry believe that the Rowan-tree, or quicken-tree, or mountain ash, is endowed with great power against fairy spells: the fairies fear it.

† Kilmoodan, the residence of Eileen's father.

V.

It looks on him, as fast away he hies,
With melancholy fondness in its gaze ;
It looks on her with keen malignant eyes,
As though each glance would kill her. Through the maze
Of woods Kilmooodan's turrets now arise
Upon their path, and in a gorgeous haze
Of golden vapour, fades the fawn away
Beside the barbican so strong and grey.

VI.

The warder from the barbican shouts down,
He sees Queen Cleena walking o'er the glade,
With robe of heaven's own blue, and starry crown ;
But nought they see—the lover or the maid—
Save that light golden vapour.—Crimson brown
The twilight steals o'er hill and forest shade,
As Gerald and his Eileen gain the hall
Where feast their smiling friends and clansmen all.

VII.

Next morning rose in all its summer pride
Upon Kilmooodan's towers and leafy wood,
And love that scorned all change of time and tide
Swelled high in Gerald's heart, as there he stood
Clasping the white hand of his beauteous bride
Before the glittering altar ; and a flood
Of joy swept o'er them when the rite was done,
When both fond hearts in life and death were one.

VIII.

And night came o'er the mountains high ; and clear
The harps melodious rang within the hall,
Where o'er the dancers' heads gleamed sword and spear
And targe and helm and banner, from the wall ;
And Gerald takes his Eileen's hand :—" And here,"
In accents sweet and low, he says, " when all
Dance now for joy, we'll dance for joy and love !"
And down the floor in circlets light they move.

IX.

At once, as rose the clansmen's loud acclaim,
A dazzling light through loop and window shone,
That filled the broad hall like a flood of flame,
Blinding the dancers' eyes ; and when 'twas gone,
Hearts throbbed and cheeks were blanched of knight and
dame ;
And dazed with fear and woe, all trembling, wan,
Young Eileen stood—her loving bridegroom flown—
Amid th' affrighted dancers, all alone !

X.

Short time she stood, then fell and closed her eyes,
Like a white lily frost-blanchèd in the vale ;
And all that night of woe and wild surprise,
Wordless and like the marble cold and pale,
She lay on her sad couch ; but when the skies
Blushed red with morn, she woke ; and then a wail
Burst from her as she looked her chamber round
With wildsome eyes, and yet no bridegroom found.

XI.

And many a doctor grave and man of lore
They brought to cure her mind, for she was mad.
Ah ! nought could each one do but loud deplore—
As they looked on the bride—her doom so sad.
At length they brought Black Cathleen of Kilmore,
For many a spell and wondrous cure she had,
That sybil old, who drank her first draught full
Her birthday morning from the raven's skull.*

* They say that should an infant get the first draught from the skull of a raven, he or she will be endowed with prophetic powers.

XII.

She heard her tale. "Thy Gerald is not dead!"
She cried aloud. "Bound by Queen Cleena's chain,
Where Carrig-Cleena* rears its flinty head,
And Avonmore pours down the woods amain,
He lingers in his grief, with hope still fed
Of seeing the green earth and thee again.
Go there and ask for him, and well thou'lt prove
That not ev'n Cleena's spells can conquer love."

XIII.

They would not let her go: but one still noon
Of midnight, when deep slumber brooded o'er
Her father's stately hall, she donned her shoon
Her garments and her cloak, and by the shore
Of the lone forest rill, beneath the moon,
She stole away. Ah! many a mountain hoar
Lay between her and home when dewy morn
Glittered like golden fire on tree and thorn.

XIV.

With weary feet she crossed the forest glen,
With many a sigh toiled up the mountain slope,
And sat upon its ridge to weep, and then
Went down into the woods with wakening hope;
Away by lone Glengartan's reedy fen,
And on where Connaill's mountains to the cope
Of heaven towered upward through the purple air,
She rested in the burning noon; and there—

* Carrigcleena, a remarkable circle of natural rocks, five miles S.-W. from Mallow, still well-known. Under the green plot in the centre it was believed that Queen Cleena had her palace. See page 28, above. The whole neighbourhood still teems with legends about Cleena.

XV.

There laughed a sunny lakelet 'mid the trees,
Clear mirroring a ruin hoar and lone,
Like the blue bosom of those fabled seas
Where thunders never growl nor wild winds moan.
Over its azure breast the wild duck flees,
The heron broods upon the shore-side stone,
And from its secret home at evening's gloom
The wary bittern sends its quivering boom.

XVI.

Above her was a rugged lonely pass,
Cleft through the splintered mountain like a gate—
A Titan gate ; mass towered on ponderous mass
Of savage rock each side ; all desolate,
Naked it yawned, save where scant gorse and grass
Spotted its torrid ribs ; and there elate
With life amid the stillness, one small rill
Shot down in gladness from the giant hill.

XVII.

Now in that pass volcanic there appeared
A small, light, spiral cloud slow moving on
Unto young Eileen's path ; and when it neared,
From out its fleecy folds that snow-white fawn
Came and looked on her with a wild and weird
Light in its bitter orbs of fiery tawn—
A threatening light, a keen malignant ray
That struck the poor bride's heart with strange dismay

XVIII.

She placed her hand within her snowy vest
To still the fear with which that lorn heart strove ;
There found suspended on her faithful breast
A golden cross, her Gerald's gift of love,
And drew it quickly forth. " At His behest,
Whose holy sign this is, I charge thee move
From off my onward path ! " fair Eileen said ;
And at the word the white fawn shrieked and fled.

XIX.

She kissed that blessed symbol ; went her way ;
With sinking heart o'er many a mile she wept ;
And at the peaceful close of that bright day
Within a woodman's hut she ate and slept :—
Slept long and sound, until the yellow ray
Of morning gilt the hill-tops : then she crept
Out from her heather couch and shaped agen
Her southern pathway through the forest glen.

XX.

At last she reached the crag. There lightning split
It stood with jagged front so stern and high,
As if the earth in some volcanic fit
Had burst, and cast it upward towards the sky ;
And now, while red its topmost spires were lit
By sunset, Eileen, with a wild shrill cry,
Called on the queen her bridegroom to restore ;
But only echo answered evermore.

XXI.

She called and wept, and wept and called again,
On the hard-hearted queen, till twilight fell
Upon each forest, hill, and drowsy plain ;
Then sped she to a cave far down the dell
Where dwelt an aged hermit. “ Moons may wane,
And years may vanish,” he began to tell,
As she sat by his side, “ ere thou'lt obtain
Thy bridegroom from Queen Cleena's magic chain.”

XXII.

Nathless as each morn rose she took her place
And called in piteous tones upon the queen
Her bridegroom to restore ; and her sad face
In the rude blasts soon lost its blooming sheen.
And autumn came ; the winds began to chase
The leaves in the brown woods, and winter keen
Approached ; and still poor Eileen sat her there,
Loud calling for her love in wild despair.

XXIII.

At length 'twas Hallow Eve :* before that crag
 She knelt beseeching with her arms out-thrown ;
 Yet answerless each flinty spire and jag
 Towered to the heavens, by wild winds beat and blown.
 The morn sped on, till like a tattered flag
 The noonday sky outspread, and with loud moan
 The western blast o'er the dark hills did urge
 Mountains of tumbling cloud from ocean's surge.

XXIV.

The twilight fell ; and when her eyes she raised
 To take that day's last wistful look, there bright
 Before her the great rock—a palace—blazed,
 With towers and domes and halls of golden light.
 Through the tall portal, a long train that dazed
 Her wondering eyes, out came—bold squire and knight
 And lady ; and in front in splendid sheen,
 With grace immortal walked the Fairy Queen.

XXV.

And, "Come, thou faithful maid !" Queen Cleena said,
 "I've proved thy love and deathless constancy—
 Thy love that might the dull dust of the dead
 From its cold sleep awake. Come now with me !"
 She took young Eileen by the hand, and led
 Into the great hall golden bright. "And see,"
 Again she said, "the cause of thy sad moan,
 Thy Gerald, high upon yon glittering throne."

XXVI.

She looked,—her Gerald looked,—but in his eye
 She saw no sign of welcome warm and fond ;
 He knew her not ; then rose a bitter cry
 Of woe from the poor bride. Anon her wand

* On Hallow Eve, or Samain Eve, the fairy palaces all through the country are thrown open: see Joyce's *Smaller Social History of Ancient Ireland*, p. 112.

Queen Cleena took, and with a mournful sigh
Of disappointed love and sad despond
She laid it on his brow. From fairy charms
He woke, and clasped his young bride in his arms.

XXVII.

“Now choose thee,” said the mournful queen again,
“’Tween earth and this immortal palace grand.”
“I choose,” Earl Gerald said, “my broad domain
And faithful bride.” Young Eileen took his hand,
With joyous heart, ’mid that resplendent train
Of dames and knights, and out from Fairyland
She led him through the golden palace door
Into the world of mortal life once more.

XXVIII.

And many a horseman spurred when morning flashed
O’er the hills’ ruby cones, by dale and down,
The news to tell, and many a weapon clashed
On gladsome shield from wall of tower and town ;
From where old Ventry’s sands are murmuring lashed
By the grey waves, to Galtee’s stony crown,
The harps rang joyful in each Desmond hall
For the young bridegroom freed from fairy thrall.

He ceased, and looked upon Dark Gillimore,—
Dark Gillimore the Squire of Dallan Green.
“Sir Squire,” he said, “since first a lance I bore
With thee in battle’s van, I’ve ever seen,
With saddened mind, thy dark and mournful mien.
What makes thee such a gloomsome lonely man ?
Hast thou some tale to tell of sorrow keen ?”—
The squire sat silent for a little span,
Then heaved a rueful sigh and thus his tale began :—

BALLAD OF DARK GILLIEMORE; OR, THE
MOURNFUL SQUIRE.

I.

I PLEDGE ye, comrades, in this cup
Of usquebaugh, bright brimming up ;
And now while winds are blowing rude
Around our camp fire in the wood,
I'll tell my tale, yet sooth to say
It will be but a mournful lay.

II.

Glenanner* is a lovely sight,
Oun-Tarra's dells are fair and bright,
Sweet are the flowers of Lisnamar,
And gay the glynns 'neath huge Benn Gar ;
But still, where'er our banner leads,
'Mid tall brown hills or lowland meads,
By storied dale or mossy down,
My heart goes back to Carrick town.

III.

By Carrick town a castle brave
Towers high above its river wave,
Well belted round by wall and fosse
That foot of foe ne'er strode across.
Look on me now—a man am I
Of mournful thoughts and bearing sad ;
Yet once my hopes flowed fair and high,
And once a merry heart I had ;
For I was squire to Ormond then,
First in his train each jovial morn

* Anner and Tar, two rivers in the south of Tipperary, near Clonmel and Carrick-on-Suir, both falling into the Suir. (*Oun* means river.) Benn Gar, the highest peak of Galtymore.

He flew his hawks by moor and fen,
 Or chased the stag by rock and glen
 With music sweet of hound and horn.
 Young Ormond was a goodly lord
 As ever sat at head of board.
 If Europe's kings, some festal day,
 Sat round the board in revel gay,
 And he were there, and I in hall,
 The seneschal to place them all,
 I'd place him without pause or fault
 Among their best above the salt.
 You need not smile, Sir Hugh le Poer,
 Nor you, young Donal of Killare ;
 I'd prove my words, ay, o'er and o'er,
 With skian* in hand and bosom bare,
 Or sword to sword and jack to jack,
 For sake of Thomas Oge the Black !†

IV.

'Twas then the time when mortal strife,
 Steel axe to axe and knife to knife,
 Was waged between the Butler line
 And the strong race of Geraldine.
 And Desmond‡ was a foeman stout
 In battle, siege, or foray rout ;
 With spur on heel and sword in hand,
 Upon the borders of our land,

* Skian [skeean], a dagger.

† Thomas, surnamed, from his complexion, the Black or Swarthy, earl of Ormond.

‡ Desmond. This was Garrett earl of Desmond, who headed the Geraldine rebellion, 1565-1583.

The Butlers were earls of Ormond, the FitzGerald (or Geraldines) were earls of Desmond ; and these two families were nearly always at feud with each other.

With his fierce hobbelers* he kept,
And often on our hamlets swept,
As swoops the eagle from the mountain
On the young lambkins by the fountain,
And in his talons bears away
To crags remote his bleeding prey.
And many a goodly tower and town
Before his hot assaults went down ;
For havoc, flame, and woeful sack,
Forever marked his vengeful track.
Yet oft we met him sword to sword,
By mountain pass and lowland ford,
And turned the tide of war again
Far through each Desmond vale and glen.

V.

The March winds sang through bower and tree,
And shook the young reeds by the ferry,
And light cloud-shadows o'er the lea
Ran like the billows of the sea,
One day that in the tilt-yard we
Were making merry ;
When swift as those light clouds that fled
Over each vale and moorland brown,
A mounted courier towards us sped
Wild spurring down,
Then rode unto the castle straight,
And blew his bugle at the gate.
The Decies'† badge full well we knew,
On the light cap and folling‡ blue,
The hasty clansman wore.

* Hobbeler, a horseman : from "hobby," a kind of horse.

† Decies, a territory and tribe in Co. Waterford, over which Desmond claimed jurisdiction.

‡ Folling, Irish *fallainn*, a mantle.

I wot that small delay had he,
So eager for his news were we,
For back the ponderous bolts we drew,
And led him straight our chief before.
He told how Desmond and his men
Had crossed the border mountain glen,
A small but hardy band,
Assailed his chieftain's hamlets free,
And levied coign and liverie*
Within the Decies' land.
Then begged the noble Butler's aid
To stem the Desmond's ruthless raid.

VI.

In sooth, his prayer was not in vain,
For, ere one hour, o'er hill and plain
Full many an eager gillie trode,
And many a rushing easlach† rode,
Till twilight, when on tower and mount
A hundred war-fires you might count.
Old Carrick town rang loud next morn
With roll of drum and bray of horn,
For from each forest, plain, and glynn,
The clansmen all had gathered in.

Then Butler issued from his hall
Among his gallant clansmen all,
And straightway took the southern track,
While we rode gayly at his back ;
And never his charger rested he
By cross of road or fount or plain,
Until he reached, where, broad and strong,
Blackwater rushes by crag and tree,

* Coign (or Coyne) and Livery, a kind of tribute: see Index in Joyce's History of Ireland.

† Easlach, a mounted messenger.

With plaintive roar or gladsome song,
'Mid the bonnie woods of wild Affane.*
Within those woods we camped that night,
And waited but the morning light
To fall upon proud Desmond's path,
And on his raiders vent our wrath.

VII.

When morn's first beams began to quiver
On crest of rock and wave of river,
A marshalled band we saw far south
Emerging from a valley's mouth,
And knew 'twas Desmond and his men.
He saw us by the ford arrayed—
The Desmond bold—and when they prayed—
His bearded knights—that he would flee
Our onset, stoutly answered he,
With knitted brow and flashing eye—
“Though we are only one to three,
Beside yon ford I'd rather lie,
Bloody and stiff within my jack,
Than on a Butler turn my back.”

Then hoarsely rose the battle yell,
And fast the Desmond clansmen fell ;—
Yet stoutly still our charge they met,
Though gallantly to work we set,
Until Sir Edmund's petronel
Brought Desmond down, and he was made
A prisoner in that gory dell :
So ended his disastrous raid.

* Affane, on the Blackwater, a mile and a half south of Cappoquin. An account of this battle, fought in 1565, will be found in Joyce's *Short History of Ireland*, p. 420. Desmond was unexpectedly (the Four Masters say treacherously) caught here by superior numbers.

'Twas then, as five tall Butlers bore
 The wounded Desmond by the shore,
 "Where is the mighty Desmond now?"
 They asked, amid that battle's wreck;
 He raised himself, all red with gore,
 And answered with exultant brow,—
 "O, where, but on the Butler's neck!"*

VIII.

The fight was fought, the noonday sun
 Shone down on banner, glaive, and gun
 Of the proud victors, as they sped
 Back to their homes the hills across—
 Shone on the vanquished as they fled
 Through tangled woods and paths that led
 O'er meadowy plain and desert moss;
 And up the huge-ribbed hills so high,—
 And with them, prisoner bound, was I.

IX.

They placed me in a dungeon strong,
 Where distant Mulla† winds among
 The leafy woods of Houra's‡ hills,
 Fed by a hundred dancing rills;
 And there I pined for many a day,
 Till five long seasons passed away.
 Then when they thought my spirit broke,
 They freed me from their curséd yoke,
 And bade me wander as I might,
 Yet warned me 'gainst escape or flight.
 I well remember, ay, and will
 Till some brave foe my blood shall spill,

* An incident related in the records.

† Mulla. Spenser's Mulla is the Aubeg river, near Buttevant and Doneraile.

‡ Houra, the Ballyhoura Mountains.

The day I crossed my dungeon door,
And sought the wild woods free ;
The summer sky was laughing o'er ;
And from green glen and height and shore
The jocund birds their songs did pour
So merrilie ;
And to mine eyes all nature wore
A look of wondrous brilliancy.
An infant's strength was more than mine
As I went forth that morn ;
I thought each stream a draught divine,
I rested 'neath each blossomed thorn,
Or slowly strayed o'er height and hollow,
Long draughts of balmy air to swallow.

X.

My strength returned. One golden eve
As up the hills I clomb,
Sweet dreams within my heart to weave,
And think upon my far-off home,
I gained a valley lone and deep,
Where Ounanaar's* bright waters leap
And fill the thick green woods with song,
Wild tumbling through the dells along.
I sat me by the voiceful stream,—
I sat me in a pleasant dream ;
For who could pass that valley fair
And stop not for a moment there ?
The green ash o'er the torrent grew,
The oak his strong arms upwards threw
To the blue heavens, as if to clasp
Some wandering cloudlet in his grasp.
The leafy branches thick and green
On all sides made a shadowy screen,

* Ounanaar, the Glenanaar river : see note, p. 19.

Save where a little vista showed
 Beneath me where the torrent sheen,
 A mimic lake, all smoothly flowed,
 With many a sparkling ripple stealing
 Over its breast of radiancy,
 Wild beauties on its banks revealing ;
 And, O, what it revealed to me !

XI.

There, on a green and mossy stone,
 A young bright maiden stood alone
 Gazing upon the foam-wreaths white
 That sparkled on their pathway rude,
 And ne'er was seen a fairer sight.
 Methought that maiden, as she stood,
 Some phantom, or a vision bright,
 Or lovely spirit of the wood.
 A moment—I was standing there
 Beside that maid so young and fair ;
 A moment—and my heart was gone
 With her bright face and sunny hair ;
 And ah ! so sweet her blue eyes shone,
 'Twas lost ere I was half aware.
 A moment—for time went so fleet,
 Long hours had minutes been to me —
 And in that lone and wild retreat
 There we were talking pleasantly.
 I told her how in their strong tower
 A prisoner I had lain,
 And how I longed for that glad hour
 When I might 'scape their chain ;
 And found she was a captive too,
 For three long years,—
 A captive from that sweet land where,
 Above the blooming woods of Caher,
 Wild Galty to the skies so blue
 Its tall crest rears.

XII.

It boots not, comrades, now to tell
How oft we met in that lone dell,
And how we loved, and how we planned
To 'scape and reach the Butler's land.
One morn a brave black steed I caught,—
My captor's own fleet steed,—
And rode away to that wild spot
With headlong speed ;
And towards far Ormond, glad and free,
I bore my love away with me.

XIII.

But sorrow came too soon—alas !
As we sped down Glendarra's* pass,
The foe came thundering on our track
With matchlocks pointed at my back.
Away across Turlaggan's* rill,
Up to the foot of Gurma's* hill ;
But when I gained its summit high,
Between my foemen and the sky,
A bullet hurtled through the air
And grazed my side with sudden smart,
And lodged within my true love's heart.

XIV.

Ah, woe is me ! the look she gave,
It haunts me yet ;
Its bitter anguish but the grave
Can make my heart forget.
One sudden look of woeful pain—
And she was dead ;
And I—far down into the plain,
O'er rocks and glens I fled,

* These places are all among the hills, four or five miles N.-W. from Mitchelstown, on the way towards Kilfinane.

And speeding onward like the wind,
 I left my foemen far behind ;
 Away, away on that swift horse,
 Claspings close my true-love's corse !

XV.

I bore her to yon peakéd hill,
 And scooped her narrow bed,
 And laid the earth, so damp and chill,
 Above my darling's head.
 And, comrades, since that woeful day
 I've never known
 One hour of gladness : and I crave,
 When I shall fall amid the fray,
 You'll bear me to yon mountain lone,
 And lay me in my true love's grave.

THE FOUR COMRADES.

AFTER THE BATTLE.

I.

THERE were two comrades stout and free,
 Within the Wood of Barnalee,
 Under the spreading oaken tree.

II.

The sun poured down his ruddy light
 On blooming wold and purple height ;
 The wild birds sang, the streams ran bright.

III.

There they sat at set of sun,
 Their battle fought, their victory won :
 Sir Hugh le Poer, that heart of fire,
 And the dark Minstrel with his lyre,
 Thinking thinking mournfully,
 Under the spreading oaken tree,

Of their gallant comrades twain
Lying on the battle plain.

IV.

Comrades to their latest breath,
True in life and true in death,
God give them peace, God shield them well,
Those who escaped and those who fell.

EILEEN'S LAMENT FOR GERALD.*

AIR: "Péarla an chúil chraobhaigh."†

I.

On the bloom-covered shore
Of strong Avonmore,
I've mourned for my Gerald till summer is o'er ;
And autumn falls lone
On Kilmore's‡ mountain zone,
But Cleena, still Cleena ne'er heedeth my moan.

II.

O, sweet fell the hours
By Crom's§ lordly towers,
When we strayed, ever loving, through Maigne's blooming
bowers:—
From bright June to May
Was one blissful day,
Ere my true love was borne from his Eileen away.

* See "Earl Gerald and his Bride," p. 28, above, where it is related how Eileen recovered her Gerald from the fairy queen Cleena in the end. She slept each night in a hut near the Avonmore or Blackwater, and came to Carrigeleena every morning.

† For which see Petrie's Ancient Music of Ireland, p. 184.

‡ Kilmore, a district near Mallow.

§ Crom: Croom Castle on the River Maigne in Limerick.

III.

With gems of red gold
 Gleamed his mail in the wold,
 As he strode where the lone druid worshipped of old ;
 But the young Fairy Queen
 Passed there one bright e'en,
 And the flash of his bright mail was never more seen.

IV.

She bore him that night
 To her palace of light,
 In this rock* wild and lone by the spells of her might ;
 And she keeps him in thrall,
 The bright prince of her hall,
 While she heeds not my wailing, she hears not my call.

V.

And thus I must weep
 By Cleena's grey steep,
 Joy faded, hope clouded, and sorrow more deep ;
 And I'll mourn on the shore
 In the autumn frosts hoar,
 Till I die for my Gerald by strong Avonmore.

 THE BARON AND THE MILLER.

The weird legend related in this ballad was current among the people of Limerick and Tipperary sixty or seventy years ago. In a fit of rage the miller uttered the wish, as in verse xii ; and he got his wish in the end.

I.

THERE was a steed, a brave black steed,
 Lithe of body and limb,
 And in country or town, for strength or speed,
 There never was one like him.

* Rock : Carrigcleena, the fairy queen's palace : see p. 32.

BALLADS OF IRISH CHIVALRY.

II.

He had sinews of brass for the chase's flight,
Eyes of fire as he swept the hill;
He'd a heart of steel for the bloody fight;
And his master was Hugh of the Mill.

III.

But Hugh of the Mill had a master too—
The Baron of Derrinlaur,*
Whom he served in peace as a vassal should do,
And followed in day of war.

IV.

Never were twain by hill or by plain
So matched in passion and ill
As the baron bold of that castle old,
And his strong vassal, Hugh of the Mill.

V.

By Cummeraght† one morn, with stag-hound and horn,
They hunted like the wind,
But the miller's black steed with his sinews of speed
Left the ireful baron's behind.

VI.

"This brown steed of mine, strong Hugh, shall be thine,
With fifty crowns so bright;
But I must have thy charger brave,
For I need him in the fight!"

VII.

Then out and told that miller so bold:
"I care not for favour or pelf;
And this brave steed of mine shall never be thine,
For I need his strength myself!"

* Derrinlaur Castle ruin stands on the southern, or Waterford, bank of the Suir, about three miles below Clonmel. Only one tower remains, now covered with ivy.

† Cummeragh mountains in Waterford.

VIII.

Then an ireful man was the dark baron,
And an angry laugh he gave :
“ I will have thy steed, though the demon should feed
On thy carcass, thou grinding knave ! ”

IX.

And though Hugh was strong, down down to the earth
The vassals have dragged him amain,
And they've changed each saddle and rein and girth,
And mounted him once again.

X.

On the baron's brown horse now he's mounted perforce,
And the proud baron sits on the other ;
The baron is glad, but the miller is mad
With a passion he cannot smother.

XI.

He digs the spurs in the brown steed's sides
Till it snorts with rage and pain ;
Then up with a fiendish frown he rides
To the baron's bridle rein.

XII.

“ *May the memory of crime thy bosom freeze—
The worm that never dies—
Till the flames of hell on thy dark soul seize,
And I see it with mine eyes !* ”

XIII.

Then he plunges and volts, and away he bolts,
And down the rough mountain he's gone ;
While the vassals' laughter rings loudly after,
And the shout of the fierce baron.

XIV.

There were battles enough both bloody and tough
To employ them both, I wot,
And many moons ran over master and man,
Till the curse was all forgot.

XV.

But there came a day when the baron lay
On his bed of sickness and dole,
And the bells were rung at the evening grey
For his departing soul.

XVI.

There came three knocks at the miller's gate
In the dead hour of the night,
And the miller he rose at a furious rate,
And looked forth in the full moon's light.

XVII.

And there sat the Baron of Derrinlaur
Upon the swift black horse,
And his fixed eyes glared 'neath his visor bar,
And his brow was pale as a corse.

XVIII.

"Come hither, come hither, thou miller brave,—
Come, mount and follow me!"
On the dark-brown steed Hugh is mounted with speed,
And away with the baron is he:

XIX.

In their garb of war by old Derrinlaur,
And down by the rushing Suir,
Till they strike on a track all barren and black,
O'er a wide and lonely moor.

XX.

Black mountains rise to the dusky skies
Beyond that desert place,
As side by side away they ride
In a fierce and furious race.

XXI.

Taller and taller each giant hill
And darker their deep chasms grow,
As away over quagmire and brawling rill
Like demons of night they go.

XXII.

Redder and redder the baron's eyes glared.
 But 'twas more from rage than fear,
 As the bog-fiend's lamp on their pathway flared,
 And they swept that barrier near.

XXIII.

And there at last rose a crag so vast
 That it hid in the clouds its face ;
 Then the miller reined in, but the baron spurred past
 Till he neared its gloomy base.

XXIV.

Then it rocked and shaken, and it groaned and quaked,
 And its breast burst right before,
 And a mighty flame through the broad rent came
 As from hell's eternal door.

XXV.

Yet on and on spurred the fierce baron
 Till he came to that fiery rent ;
 Then his teeth he ground, and with one great bound
 Through its flaming throat he went !

XXVI.

One thunderous roar through the heavens tore
 As the rent upclosed again,
 And the bog-fiend's lamp went out on the swamp,
 And the black cocks crowed by the fen.

.

XXVII.

The miller he rose at the break of day,
 And looked for the crag and the moor :
 Nought before him lay but that castle grey
 And his own blithe mill by the Suir.

XXVIII.

Then he crossed the mill weir speedily,
 And straight to the stable he sped ;
 But a humbled and awe-struck man was he,
 When he found his steed stark dead !

XXIX.

Then sore of body and weary of bone,
To Derrinlaur he passed ;
From its gloomy halls rose the vassals' moan,
For the baron was gone at last.

XXX.

“And now, once more, my brave black steed,
I will have thee,” the miller said,
As he sought the stable with eager speed :
But the black steed, too, was dead !

SONG OF THE FOREST FAIRY.

I.

WHERE the gold moss hangs on the mighty oak,
Where never was heard the woodman's stroke,
In the ancient woods
Where the wild deer bide—
Where the heron broods
By the lakelet's side,
Morn, noon, and eve, in the rosy air,
We dance and sport full merrily there.

II.

At night in a glade of the brightest green,
We meet with glad homage our youthful queen.
There in revel and feast
We spend the night,
Or in balmy rest
Till the morning light ;
Or out on the greensward smooth and fair,
We dance and sport so merrily there.

III.

'Tis glorious to see the globes of dew
 By the red beams of morn pierced through and through ;
 'Tis sweet to peer
 Where the wild-flower gleams,
 And sweeter to hear
 The birds and the streams ;
 And sweeter than all in the blue, bright air,
 To dance and sport so merrily there !

LITTLE THOMAS.

John, the young Earl of Desmond, was drowned at the Ford of Ardfinnan, in the year 1398 (Four Masters, iv., p. 761). Ardfinnan, on the Suir above Clonmel, and five miles below Caher: its fine castle stands right over the river, near the bridge which was built on the site of the old ford where the Earl was drowned.

I.

NEAR the towers of old Ardfinnan, by the broad ford's
 mossy stone,
 Down sat the little Thomas and thus he made his
 moan :—
 "He has perished, he has perished, O, my chieftain
 young and brave,
 And my father too sleeps with him underneath the rush
 ing wave.

II.

'Many hearts for John of Desmond through the Munster
 vales will pine,
 But none will beat amongst them half so desolate as
 mine.—
 I, the page, whose pleasant duty was by my dear lord
 to stay,—
 I, the orphan lone, whose father hath perished here to-
 day."

III.

The golden blaze of sunset died from out the western sky,
The moon in clear white splendour rose o'er the peaked
mountains high,
But the little page sat weeping still beside the ford's grey
stone,
And to the waters sweeping thus again he made his
moan :—

IV.

“Woe is me ! that they have perished ; ah, I nevermore
shall find
A master like the Desmond, a lord so good and kind ”—
Here he started from his mossy seat with a sudden throb
of fear,
For the Desmond stood before him in the moonlight cold
and clear !

V.

On his limbs the battle harness, on his head bright helm
and plume,
But pale pale were his features, marked that morn with
youth's fair bloom.
“Stay thy lorn and bitter weeping, O my little page,” he
said,
“For beneath the waters sleeping it has waked the early
dead.

VI.

“The good sword that I gave thee on our last victorious
day,
It shall carve thy path to glory if bright honour light the
way.
One little maid there dwelleth by the green shore of the
Lee,
Only her love shall be greater than my constant love for
thee.”

VII.

The phantom warrior vanished in the cold light of the
moon,
And the little page now heareth but the Suir's low
murmuring tune ;
Swift he rusheth from the river, swift he springeth on
his steed,
And through the moon-lit forest path he's gone with
lightning speed.

VIII.

Ten springs more have decked the valleys and it is a
morn in May ;
Knightly spurs the page now weareth, for bright honour
lit his way ;
Before the bridal altar with a happy heart stands he,
And his bride is that fair maiden by the green shore of
the Lee.

THE BATTLE OF BENBURB.

Benburb, on the Blackwater, five miles N.-W. from Armagh,
where Owen Roe O'Neill defeated the Scottish army under
Monroe: 1646. Consult any History of Ireland.

I.

O'ER the hills of Benburb rose the red beam of day,
Gleaming bright from our foemen in battle array ;
But as brightly again in the midsummer glow,
It shone back from the troops of our brave Owen Ree

II.

Monroe had his thousands arrayed at his back,
With their Puritan mantles steel morion and jack,
And with him Ardes, Blayney, and Conway had come :
To crush Owen Roe at the roll of the drum.

III.

And who with O'Neill on that morn drew the brand ?
 Bold hearts as e'er beat by the Blackwater strand :
 Sir Phelim, brave chief, with the bosom of fire,
 O'Donnell, MacSweeney, and gallant Maguire.

IV.

From Derry's wild woodlands, from Maine's sounding
 tide,*
 From Leitrim and Longford, came chiefs to our side,
 And stern in the front with his sabre in hand,
 Stood bold Myles the Slasher the pride of our land.†

V.

We kept, all that noontide, the Scotsmen at play,
 Though we thought of their forays and burned for the
 fray ;
 For our Chief bade us wait till the eve had begun,
 Then rush on the foe with our backs to the sun.

VI.

Then down to our front with his chiefs he spurred fast,—
 “ My brave men ! the day of our weakness is past ;
 We have hearts now as firm as our sires had of yore,
 When Bagenal they routed by Callan's green shore.‡

VII.

“ See, their cannon the foe for our columns have set ;
 Strike, and have them to play on their own columns yet ;
 For God and green Erin stern and sure be your blow,
 As ye fight in my path !” said our brave Owen Roe.

* Maine, the river flowing by Castlemaine in Kerry.

† Mailmora or Myles O'Reilly, called *Myles the Slasher* from his great strength and bravery—a colonel under Owen Roe.

‡ At the battle of the Yellow Ford on the river Callan, six miles north of Armagh, where Hugh O'Neill defeated Bagenal 1598.

VIII.

Hurrah for the Red Hand !* And on, to a man,
Our columns poured down like a storm on their van,
Where a sermon was preaching to strengthen their zeal,
But we gave them a sermon—the point of our steel.

IX.

The Slasher looked round as we closed in the fight,—
“ Now, my men ”—he called out—“ reap your harvest ere
night !”
Then he dashed at the foe with his long heavy blade,
And, *mavrone*, what a lane through their columns he made !

X.

There was panic before us and panic beside,
As their horsemen fled back in a wild broken tide ;
And we swept them along by the Blackwater shore
Till we reddened its tide with the Puritans' gore.

XI.

Few foemen escaped on that well-stricken day ;
On the field, in the river, by thousands they lay ;
Fierce Blaney had fallen where he charged by the fen—
He slept face to heav'n by the side of his men.

XII.

A kern† by the river held something on high ;—
“ Saint Columb, is it thus that our enemies fly !
Perchance 'tis my coolun which they clipped long ago,—
Milē Gloria, the rough wig of flying Monroe !”‡

* The Red Hand was the cognisance and standard of the O'Neills, kings of Ulster.

† Kern, a foot-soldier : “ Coolun,” the long hair at the back of the head.

‡ “ Monroe escaped and fled in panic, bareheaded, leaving on the field his sword, cloak, helmet, and wig.” Joyce's History of Ireland.

XIII.

And we took from the foes ere that calm twilight fall
Their horses and baggage and banners and all ;
Then we sat by our watch-fires and drank in the glow
Merry health to our leader, the brave Owen Roe !

THE DYING BALLAD-SINGER.

I.

O THADY dear, the way is long,
My heart and feet are sore and weary ;
I'll never sing another song
In tented Fair or Patron* cheery.
But since the day I met with you,
I never envied lord or lady :
No care nor woe nor joy I knew
That was not shared by Rovin' Thady.

II.

Since th' hour I ran from home away,
O, many a pang my heart has riven ;
The worst of all was that Fair-day
I saw my brother at Knockevan.
'Twas at the dance—now pause and mind,
What care, with sorrow shame and sin, does,—
The feet were going like the wind,
For they were dancing "Smash the windows."

III.

He saw me, but he took no note ;
He knew me not, so changed and worn ;
The song I sung swelled in my throat—
'Twas worse than all that I had borne.

* Patron—usually called a *pattern*—a celebration at a holy well in honour of the *patron* saint.

I stopped, I gazed upon them there ;
I thought of happy days departed,
Then turned and tottered through the Fair,
And left the place all broken-hearted.

IV.

Now wrap me in my old grey cloak,
And lay me by this path-side fountain ;
I think on those whose hearts I broke,
Far far away by Barna's mountain ;
Long calm they lie where Barna's stream
Around the church-yard* wall is flowing.
O, on their death-bed did they dream
Of her that's now so quickly going ?

V.

I fear the bones of some would stir
With grief, were their cold earth laid o'er me,
Yet still I long to lie near her,
The mother dear that nursed and bore me.
I ask it with my latest breath—
You won't refuse your Maureen Grady—
O, take me, lay me near in death,
Near her I kilt, my Rovin' Thady.

* The churchyard of Darra: see Index, and p. 74, below.

THE COCK AND THE SPARROW.

I.

ONE morn, at the sack of Cragnour,*
 A cock and a sparrow were speaking,
 While beneath where they sat on the tower
 The Crop-ears† their fury were wreaking—
 Were wreaking in blood, fire, and smoke—
 “Ah! the castle is gone, bone and marrow,
 And my poor Irish heart it is broke,”
 Said the brave jolly cock to the sparrow.‡

II.

“For the Crop-ears will have us full soon,
 And our bed will be no bed of roses ;
 They will starve us right dead to the tune
 Of a psalm that they’ll twang through their noses ;
 Never more shall I crow in the hall,
 For the gloom there my bosom would harrow—
 May the fiend whip them off, psalms and all,”
 Said the brave jolly cock to the sparrow.

III.

“No more,” said the sparrow, “we’ll see
 Irish gallants come in late and early ;
 No more shall they hunt o’er the lea,
 When the sweet autumn wind shakes the barley ;

* Cragnour: Carriganoura, now a grey old castle ruin rising over the north bank of the Funshion, two miles below Mitchelstown, Co. Cork: conspicuous across the river from the main road. Built by the Condons.

† Crop-ears, the Puritans—the Cromwellians.

‡ “Said the brave jolly cock to the sparrow”: the refrain of an old folk song.

Never more shall they dance on the bawn,
 Or ride from the gate like an arrow !”
 “ Ah ! no more shall I wake them at dawn,”
 Said the brave jolly cock to the sparrow.

IV.

But the chief of Cragnour soon returned,
 And the Crop-ears right sorely he hammered ;
 Then the sparrow with gleefulness burned,
 And “ Hurra for my Irish !” he clamoured ;—
 And “ Hurra for the chief of Cragnour !
 There is joy through my flesh, bone, and marrow ;
 For his victory I’ll crow hour by hour,”
 Said the brave jolly cock to the sparrow.

 THE BLACK ROBBER.

The “Mumhan mountain”* of this ballad is Blackrock, between Ardpatrik and Glenosheen, near Kilfinane, Co. Limerick. One of the torrents coming down from Blackrock flows through a glen called Glenagaddy, the “Glen of the Robber,” at the north-west side of the mountain, and three-quarters of a mile west of Lyre-na-freaghaun glen at the east side. The name “Glenagaddy,” which I fear is now forgotten in the neighbourhood, preserves the memory of the “Black Robber” of the ballad, who is also commemorated both in legends and in place-names all over Ireland, as well as in the Highlands of Scotland, under his full Irish name, *Gadaighe Dubh O’Dubhdin*, the “Black Robber O’Dwan.” In this glen is the “waterfall brown and clear” of the ballad, a quarter of a mile above the public road, from which it is seen conspicuously. The well, “circled by rock and fern,” is near the edge of the glen on the west side, a little below the fall. The proper Irish name of this fall is *Easmore* (“great waterfall,” pronounced Assmore), commemorated elsewhere in these ballads ; but it is now

* Mumhan [pron. Mooan], Munster.

often corruptly called "Spoutmoor" by English speakers. After emerging from the glen, the little stream crosses the road and flows by "St. Anne's Well,"* below and near Ardpatrik, then on by Sunville, and for some distance beside the public road, where it gives name to Ballynahown, "River-town," about a mile below Ardpatrik: joins the Loobagh near Kilmallock. This pretty little stream has a curious name—"the Noneen," literally "the Daisy," meaning I suppose "the Daisy-fringed river." "The Black Robber" also gave name to the townland and hamlet of Ballingaddy, near Ballynahown, between Ardpatrik and Kilmallock. (Joyce's Irish Names of Places, vol. ii., p. 111.)

I.

By a Mumhan mountain airy and stern,
A well lies circled by rock and fern ;
And fiercely over a precipice near
Rusheth a waterfall brown and clear.

II.

In a hollow cave near that bright well's foam
A mighty robber once made his home.
A man he was fierce sullen and dark
As ever brooded on murder stark,—

III.

A mighty man of a fearful name,
Who took their treasures from all who came,
Who hated mankind, who murdered for greed,
With an iron heart for each bloody deed.

IV.

As he sat by the torrent ford one day,
A weird-like beldame came down the way ;
Red was her mantle, and rich and fine,
But travel and dust had dimmed its shine.

* The venerable little church ruin (Kil-Saint-Anne) which stood beside this well was barbarously destroyed about half a century ago.

V.

A war-axe in his strong hand he took,
And he killed the beldame beside the brook,
And when on the greensward in death she rolled,
In her arms, lo, a babe, clad in pearls and gold!

VI.

Then darkly he raised his hand to kill;
But his fierce heart smote him such blood to spill;
And the rage for murder was there beguiled
By the innocent smile of that lovely child.

VII.

He buried the beldame beside the wave,
And he took the child to his mountain cave;
And the first jewel his red hand met,
A Fern and a Hound on its gem were set.

VIII.

He made it a bed of the fern leaves green,
And he nursed it well from that evening sheen,
And year by year as the little boy grew,
The heart of the robber grew softer too.

IX.

Ten long years were past and gone,
And the robber sat by the ford's grey stone;
And there on the eve of a spring-tide day,
A lordly pageant came down the way.

X.

Before them a banner of green and gold,
With a Fern and a Hound on its glittering fold,
Behind it a prince with a sad pale face,—
A mighty prince of a mighty race.

XI.

“Sad,” said the prince, “my fate has been,
Since the dark enchanters have taken my queen,
And they’ve snatched my child from his nurse’s hand,
And have kept him since in th’ enchanted land.”

XII.

The robber looked on the Fern and Hound,
Then sprang towards the prince with an eager bound ;
And " Why art thou sad, O king," said he,
" In the midst of this lordly companie ?"

XIII.

His kindly purpose they all mistook,
For though worn and wan, yet fierce his look ;
And sudden a noble drew out his glaive,
And cleft his skull on the beldame's grave.

XIV.

The dying robber half rose by the wave,
" O, enter," he cried, " yon lonely cave."
They entered : the pale prince found his child,
And all was joy on that mountain wild.

JOHNNIE DUNLEA.

I.

THERE'S a tree in the greenwood I love best of all,—
It stands by the side of Easmore's haunted fall,*
For beside it while sunset shone bright far away,
I met for the last time my Johnnie Dunlea.

II.

He stood by my side, and the love-smile he wore
Still brightens my heart, though 'twill beam never-
more ;
'Twas to have but one farewell, then speed to the fray ;
'Twas a farewell for ever—my Johnnie Dunlea.

* Easmore : see page 62.

III.

For the red Saxon soldiers lay hid in the dell,
 And burst on our meeting with loud savage yell;
 But their leader's red life-blood I saw that sad day
 And it stained the good sword of my Johnnie Dunlea.

IV.

My curse on the traitors, my curse on the ball
 That stretched my true love by Easmore's haunted fall;
 The blood of his brave heart ebbed quickly away,
 And he died in my arms there—my Johnnie Dunlea.

KILBRANNON.

I.

“ My love, braid up thy golden locks
 And don thy cloak and shoon;
 We'll sit upon Kilbrannon's rocks,
 While shines the silvery moon:
 And bring thy little babe with thee,
 For his dear father's sake,
 The lands where he'll be lord to see,
 By lone Kilbrannon lake.”

II.

She's braided up her golden locks,
 She's donned her cloak and shoon,
 And they're away to Kilbrannon's rocks
 By the clear light of the moon.
 Sir Hubert he took both wife and child
 Upon that night of woe,
 And hurled them over the rocks so wild
 To the lake's black depths below

III.

And he has married another May,
With locks of ebonie,
And her looks are sweet, and her heart is gay,
Yet a woeful wight is he.
He wakes the woods with his bugle horn,
But his heart is heavy and sore ;
And he ever shuns those crags forlorn
By lone Kilbrannon shore.

IV.

For down in the lake the dead won't rest,
That mournful murdered one ;
With her little babe at her pulseless breast,
She walks the waters lone ;
And she calls at night her murderer's name,
And will call for evermore,
Till the huge rocks melt in doomsday flame
By lone Kilbrannon shore.

MY FIRST LOVE.

I.

WHERE towers the rock above the trees,
With heath-bells blooming o'er,
Where waves the fern in summer breeze.
And shines the red lusmore,*
In woodland nook beside the brook,
I sit and sadly pore
On love I nursed in boyhood first
For one I'll ne'er see more.

* Lusmore : fairy-thimble : foxglove.

II.

How fair, when shines the summer beam
Upon the hillsides warm,
The lady fern beside the stream :
So fair my Margaret's form :
The snow-white crystals shine beneath,
The red lusmores above :
Ah ! such the bright bright laughing teeth
And lips of my first love.

III.

The gorse flowers Ullair's dells illumine,
One sea of golden light ;
My Margaret's hair was like their bloom,
As yellow and as bright.
'Twill haunt me still through joy or ill,
Till death shall end my care,
The wondrous grace of her fair face
Beneath that golden hair.

IV.

I loved her with a burning love
That matched my boyhood well,
And brilliant were the dreams I wove
While tranced in that sweet spell ;
And in my breast she'll reign and rest
Each eve while sad I pore,
Where ferns are green the rocks between.
And shines the red lusmore.

FAIR MAIDENS' BEAUTY WILL SOON FADE
AWAY.

AIR: "My Love she was born in the North Counterie." *

I.

My love she was born in the North counterie,
Where the highlands of Antrim look over the sea ;
My love is as fair as the soft smiling May ;
But fair maidens' beauty will soon fade away.

II.

My love is as pure as the bright blessed well
That springs from Seefin in a green lonely dell ;
My love she is graceful and tender and gay ;
But fair maidens' beauty will soon fade away.

III.

My love is as sweet as the cinnamon tree ;
As the bark to its bough cleaves she firm unto me ;
But the leaves they will wither and the roots will decay,
And fair maidens' beauty will soon fade away.

IV.

But love, though the green leaf may wither and fall,
Though the bright eye be dimmed, and the sweet smile
and all ;
O, love has a life that shall never decay,
Though fair maidens' beauty will soon fade away.

* For which see Joyce's "Ancient Irish Music," p. 68. In this song a good part of an old folk song (including the refrain) is incorporated ; the third verse is taken unchanged.

THE TWO GALLOGLASSES.*

I.

"I LOOK across the moorlands drear
 To see my Donall coming o'er :
 He left me for the wars last year,
 And night and day I think and fear
 I'll never never see him more.
 Perchance he's weltering in his gore ;
 Killeemree, oh, Killeemree !
 My days are dark, my heart is sore,
 To think that on thy lovely lea
 I'll never never see him more.

II.

"Up northwards to the Pale† he rode
 To fight the valiant Norman men ;
 His light plume in the breezes flowed,
 And bright his gilded armour glowed,
 As he sped down our native glen.
 I'll never see my love again ;
 Killeemree, oh, Killeemree !
 My heart is sore with sorrow, when
 I think that on thy sunny lea
 I'll never see my love again."

III.

Beneath a tree sat comrades two,—
 Two galloglasses in their mail ;
 All day they rode the valleys through—
 Brave Diarmid Keal and Donall Dhu—
 To meet the Normans of the Pale.

* Galloglasses, heavy-armed foot-soldiers. A galloglass *rode* when necessary on any special occasion.

† Pale, the district round Dublin, inhabited by the Anglo-Norman colony.

Said Donall of the Gilded Mail :—
“ Killemtree, oh, Killemtree !
What dost thou fight for, Diarmid Keal ? ”
“ I fight all for my fair countrie,
Tall Donall of the Gilded Mail. ”

IV.

“ And I fight for my fair countrie,
But eke for love I draw the brand—
For Mora of the southern lea :—
To purchase fame for her and me,
I’ve ever worked with heart and hand :
So I fight for love and native land.
Killemtree, oh, Killemtree !
Though both will fight still both may stand, ”
Said Donall Dhu all hopefully
As there they sat by the Liffey strand.

V.

At blink of morn upon the dell
The valiant Normans they descried ;
Then loud was heard the battle-yell ;
But ere the noon brave Diarmid fell
His comrade’s rushing steed beside.
All for his native land he died ;
Killemtree, oh, Killemtree !
It was a death of fame and pride,
And fame was his, the bold and free
Who fell upon the Liffey side.

VI.

And black the oath tall Donall swore,—
“ I’ll have revenge for him that’s slain ! ”
Then through the Norman ranks he tore,
But in their flight along the shore,
Surrounded, he was prisoner ta’en ;
But ere the morn he broke their chain,

Killemree, oh, Killemree !
And turned him towards his native plain,
Resolved to die or to be free,
And see his true-love once again.

VII.

He climbed the mountain hoar and bare,
And darted up the highland pass :
Three foemen stood against him there :—
But whirling his keen sword in the air,
He stretched the foremost on the grass ;
He clove the next through hide and brass—
Killemree, oh, Killemree !
And the last from the top of a grey rock's mass
He hurled him down right furiously :
Thus 'scaped he death in that wild pass.

VIII.

As by a Norman bridge he came,
The warder laid his jav'lin low,
To ask his purport and his name ;—
Tall Donall's sword went down like flame,
And felled the warder at a blow.
Deep wounded crossing Annadoc,
Killemree, oh, Killemree !
At length he reached her faint and slow,
And clasped young Mora tenderly,
Escaped from bond and brand of foe.

IX.

Each day she nursed him tenderly,
Her Donall of the Gilded Mail ;
'Twas love for her that set him free,
That bore him up in the far countrie,
Else he had died like Diarmid Keal.
Then there was joy o'er hill and dale,

Killemree, oh, Killemree !
Within and round their native vale,
At bridal of that maiden free
And Donall of the Gilded Mail.

ASTHOREEN MOCHREE.

AIR: "Astóirín Mochree."*

I.

SPRING with its gay flowers the fields was adorning,
Streams through the wildwood sang sweetly and free,
As I 'scaped from my cell at the dawn of the morning,
My dark tyrant scorning, Asthoreen Mochree.

II.

O, in that prison my heart was all sadness ;
The long days fell gloomy and heavy on me,
Still thinking I never might see thee in gladness,
Still brooding in madness, Asthoreen Mochree.

III.

Now I've escaped, but such darkness was never ;
How could the brightness arise save from thee ?
Black woe and despair, they have crossed my endeavour ;—
Thou art sleeping for ever, Asthoreen Mochree.

IV.

Out in the forest the branches are shaking ;
There the lone Banshee is wailing for me ;
From the wide-spreading trees the boughs she is taking,
My bier she is making,† Asthoreen Mochree.

* For which see Joyce's "Ancient Irish Music," p. 36.

† On a windy night when the trees of the wood are heard crackling—that is the banshee tearing down boughs to make a bier for some one about to die.

V.

Soon we shall meet in the grave's silent dwelling ;
 O, but 'tis joy thus to slumber with thee ;
 Soon soon shall the keeners* my hard fate be telling,
 And my death-bell be knelling, Asthoreen Mochree.

MAIRGRÉAD BÁN.†

AIR: "The old Astrologer."‡

I.

My wild heart's love, my woodland dove,
 The tender and the true,
 She dwells beside a blue stream's tide
 That bounds through sweet Glenroe ;§
 Through every change her love's the same,—
 A long bright summer dawn,
 A gentle flame,—and O, her name
 Is lovely Mairgréad Bán :
 O, joy, that on her paths I came,
 My lovely Mairgréad Bán.

II.

When winter hoar comes freezing o'er
 The mountains wild and grey,
 Her neck is white as snow-wreaths bright
 Upon thy crags, Knockeá ;||

* Keeners, mourners who cry aloud for the dead : see p. 25.

† Pronounced *Maureed Bawn* : fair-haired Margaret.

‡ For which see Joyce's "Ancient Irish Music," p 91.

§ Glenroe and Darra, near each other, forming a fine valley in the heart of the mountains between Kilfinane and Mitchelstown.

|| Knockeá : see Index and p. 81, below.

Her lips are red as roses sweet
On Darra's flowery lawn ;
Her fairy feet are light and fleet,
My gentle Mairgréad Bán ;
And O, her steps I love to meet,
My own dear Mairgréad Bán !

III.

When silence creeps o'er Houra's steeps,
As blue eve ends its reign,
Her long locks' fold is like the gold
That gleams o'er sky and main.
My heart's dark sorrow fled away
Like night before the dawn,
When one spring day I went astray,
And met my Mairgréad Bán,
And felt her blue eyes' witching ray,
My lovely Mairgréad Bán.

IV.

One summer noon, to hear the tune
Of wild birds in the wood,
Where murmuring streams flashed back the beams,
All rapt in bliss I stood ;
The birds sang from the fairy moat,*
From greenwood, brake, and lawn ;
But never throat could chant a note
So sweet as Mairgréad Bán,
As through the vales her wild songs float,
My lovely Mairgréad Bán.

* Fairy moat: see p. 26.

THE FAIRY MILL.

I.

AWAY to Ounanaar's glancing tide,
Where the redbreast sings on the hawthorn spray,
O'er craggy hill and moorland wide,
The wanderer takes his lonely way.
He is a warrior young and bold,
His path from the revel wild pursuing,
And he sits where down in Glenanaar's wold *
The ring-doves 'mid the dells are cooing.

II.

It is by the Pool of the Fairy Mill,
Where the redbreast sings on the hawthorn spray,
Where heard, but unseen, in the evening still,
Ceaseless the merry wheel worketh away ;
And he lists to its mystic plashing sound,
And he drinks—by fairy spells undaunted—
Of the crystal wave from his helmet round,
To the maid who dwells in that mill enchanted.

III.

He looks around in the sunset light,
Where the redbreast sings on the hawthorn spray,
And he is aware of a maiden bright
Close at his side by the rock-wall grey ;

* Glenanaar, a beautiful and romantic valley in the Ballyhoura Mountains, on the border of Limerick and Cork, between Doneraile and Kilfinane, through which the Ounanaar or Ogeen river flows. The legend of the fairy mill heard gently plashing was prevalent in this place sixty or seventy years ago.

The Very Rev. Dr. Sheehan, P.P. of Doneraile, has made this neighbourhood the scene of a recent novel ; and he has conferred a further distinction on the valley by naming his charming story " Glenanaar."

A clear light darts from her star-bright eyes,
Sweet is her love-lit smile and tender,
And her shining hair o'er her shoulders lies,
Yellow as gold in the sunset splendour.

IV.

"Thou hast drunk," she cries, "to the fairy maid,
Where the redbreast sings on the hawthorn spray;
Wear in thy plume this small hair braid,
And think on me at each close of day."
She has placed the braid in his nodding plume:
She is gone, like Hope from a hall of mourning,
And he hears no sound save the ceaseless hum
And the gentle plash of the Fairy Mill turning.

V.

He hies away from that haunted glen,
Where the redbreast sings on the hawthorn spray,
But spell-bound, amid the ways of men,
He thinks on the maid of the Mill alway;*
He thinks while his heart is filled with love—
And a heart ne'er resteth with love so laden—
Till he stands once more in Glenanaar's grove,
And eager calls on the fairy maiden.

VI.

He looks around in the sunset light,
Where the redbreast sings on the hawthorn spray,
And there he sees that maiden bright
Close at his side by the rock-wall grey:
"To thee," he cries, "my love, I've come
By forest green and by mountain hoary;
For thee I leave my own loved home,
The joys of peace and the battle's glory.

* Like Connla of the Golden Hair, thinking of the Fair Maiden. See Joyce's *Old Celtic Romances*, p. 108.

VII.

“ Then let me live, fair maid, with thee,
Where the redbreast sings on the hawthorn spray,
Where the Fairy Mill sounds merrily,
And love shall lighten our home alway.”
With beaming smile, and with looks of love,
She leads him down by that haunted river,
And there, 'mid Glenanaar's flowery grove
They live in cloudless joy for ever.

THE BATTLE OF KILTEELY, A.D. 1599.

For an account of the expedition to plunder and slay the peasantry, led by Sir Thomas Norris, President of Munster, ending in his defeat and death, see *Four Masters*, vol. vi., p. 2115; or *Joyce's Short History of Ireland*, p. 500. Thomas Burke, who defeated him with a much smaller force of Irish, was brother of Burke, or De Burgo, Baron of Castleconnell. Norris, as the ballad relates, was brought to Mallow, where he died of his wounds fifteen days after the battle.

Kilteely is a village in the barony of Coonagh in East Limerick, adjoining Limerick Junction Station. Knockroe and Coola are near the village.

I.

THE mountains of Limerick look down on a plain
That laughs all in light to their summits again,
Green Coonagh with rivers all storied in song,
And its tall race of peasants so hardy and strong.

II.

To harry rich Coonagh fierce Norris came down
From the towers of Kilmallock, by forest and town,
Swearing castle and homestead and temple to sack;
And, O, what a desert he left in his track !

III.

The sun of the morning smiled bright and serene
On his ranks by Knock Rue and by Coola the green ;
And how bright gleamed their spears by the tents white
and fair,
As they marshalled to plunder the rich valleys there.

IV.

They looked to the east and they looked to the west,
And they saw where their booty lay fairest and best ;
Then they moved like a thick cloud of thunder and gloom,
When it rolls o'er the plain from the slopes of Slieve
Bloom.

V.

But see ! they are halting—what shrill music swells
By the founts of Commogue,* through the forest's green
dells ?
'Tis the music of Erin—the wild martial strain
Which ne'er called her sons to the combat in vain.

VI.

“By Saint George !” exclaimed Norris, and stopped in
his course,
With his long lance stretched forth o'er the crest of his
horse,—
“By Saint George, 'tis the Gael ! 'tis his pibroch's wild
breath ;
But he meets at Killeely his masters and death !”

VII.

'Twas the Gael. Slow they wound round the foot of
Knock Rue ;
Small small were their numbers, but steady and true ;
And now as they filed on their path in the wood,
They saw the proud foe where exulting he stood.

* Commogue or Camoge, “winding river,” the little river rising near Killeely, and joining the Maigue near Croom.

VIII.

“By the turrets of Limerick !” De Burgo exclaims,
“’Tis Black Norris :—a meed for his plund’ring he claims ;
Be they countless as hail, back we never shall go
Till we measure our pikes with the steel of the foe.”

IX.

Have ye seen Avonmore, how it rushes and fills
When the flood-gates of autumn are loosed on the hills ?
So the tall men of Limerick sweep down on the spears
Of Norris the proud and his fair cavaliers.

X.

Young De Burgo is there in his trappings so bright,
And he rides side by side with his chief through the fight ;
But now he darts forward and cleaves his red way
Where the banner of England stands proud in the ray.

XI.

There Norris receives him with taunt and with sneer,
With his arquebus ball and a lunge of his spear ;
But the pike of De Burgo deep gashes his head,
And he sinks by his banner ’mid wounded and dead.

XII.

Back rode the young warrior unscathed by all,
The rush of his foemen, the spear-thrust and ball ;
With bearing defiant he treads o’er the slain,
And clears a good road to his chieftain again.

XIII.

The Saxons cry loud for their chief :—Where is he ?
Struck down at the foot of his own banner-tree ;
And the banner is gone : there is fear on each brow,
And a wild panic spreads through their broken ranks now.

XIV.

And soon they are scattered away through the woods,
Like the grey Connacht sands by the westerly floods ;
But they bear off their chieftain afar as they fly,
And they lay him in Mallow to rave and to die.

GLENARA.*

I.

GRAND are the mountains that circle Glenara,
Seefin and brown Corrin, Knockea, and Slieve Darra ;
Proudly their summits look down where its sheen flood
Lies coiled in the gorges or sunk in the greenwood.

II.

Sweet are the scenes where that clear flood enlarges,
Peaceful the homes by its flower-scented marges ;
Fair are the maidens with eyes brightly glowing,
Who bide by its windings and list to its flowing.

III.

The fairest of all amid Beauty's fair daughters,
Dwells my young love by the sound of its waters ;
At evening she roams through its fairy recesses,
My maid of the blue eyes and long golden tresses,

IV.

Far from my dear mountain home as I wander,
Ever with joy on that maiden I ponder,
Thinking and dreaming how fraught with sweet glory
My days by her side, 'mid those hills steep and hoary.

* Glenanaar in the Ballyhoura Mountains near Doneraile (see note, p. 76): Seefin Mt. over Glenosheen, four miles from Kilfinane: see "Sir Donall," farther on. Corrin or Carron, one of the Ballyhoura Mts. rising over Charleville. Knockea hill, on your left as you go from Glenosheen to Glenanaar. Slieve Darra, the hill called Carrigeennamronety or Kileruig, over Darra. See p. 89, below.

THE ROMANCE OF THE FAIRY WAND.

The Glen of Aherlow is a splendid valley near Tipperary town, ten miles long, between the Galty Mountains and Slievenamuck, with Galtymore towering right over it. Benn Gar is the highest peak of Galtymore. Dun Grod or Dungrud, one of the old royal residences of Munster, stood on the Galty side of the glen, over the Aherlow river, three miles from Galbally. Tirnanoge, the "Land of perpetual youth," was one of the names of the Irish pagan heaven (for which see Joyce's *Social Histories of Ancient Ireland*). Locally the people believed that the great Mitchelstown cavern (between Mitchelstown and Caher) was one of the entrances to it. They say should a person once cross the stream at the far end of the cavern, he could never, by his own power, return: he should remain in Fairyland for evermore. This was the cave through which—with the fairy queen's permission—the maiden entered and returned. This ballad is founded on a Munster folk legend.

I.

'MID Galty's woody highlands, by a torrent's lonely shore,
There dwelt a banished monarch in the dusky days of yore;
Long the pleasant Munster valleys had owned his kingly sway,
Till uprose a fierce usurper and reft his throne away.

II.

No vassals filled his chambers, no courtiers thronged his hall;
His bright-eyed little daughter and a grey-haired chief were all,—
Were all the friends remaining since the day of gloom and woe,
When he fled, a careworn exile, to that tower in Aherlow.

III.

Around that grey old fortress, by the shady forest springs,
With a heart for ever dreaming of all bright and lovely
things,
Roamed that regal little maiden every golden summer
e'en,
Watched and loved, where'er she wandered, by the radiant
Fairy Queen.

IV.

The sunset light was reddening on the crest of tall Benn
Gar,
As sat that little maiden beneath the woods afar ;—
“How lovely spreads this land,” she said, “in the golden
sunset's light,
But my father's bard has told me of a world more fair
and bright.

V.

“Through that land I'd wish to wander ; there I'd ask a
warrior train
Of its queen, to set my father on his Munster throne
again.”
Scarce the maid the words had uttered when there shone a
radiance sheen
Up and down the shady valley and the forest depths
between.

VI.

On the song-birds fell a silence, was no sound through
earth or air,
Till in robes of snowy splendour stood a heaven-browed
lady there ;
With kindly eyes down-looking on the little maid stood
she,
While the birds began their gladsome song again from
bower and tree.

VII.

Then spoke the Queen of Faerie with a sweet, heart-
thrilling tone,—
“Thou hast wished, O little dreamer, for a sight of our
fair zone ;
Then a gift of power I bring thee : take this snowy wand,
and when
Thou dost long to see our bright land, raise it thrice in
this wild glen.”

VIII.

Scarce the witching words were spoken when the Fairy
Queen was gone ;
But a trailing light behind her down the silent valley
shone ;
And up stood that beauteous maiden, under mystic fairy
spell,
And thrice she raised the white wand in that flower-
starred forest dell.

IX.

On a sudden stood beside her a milk-white palfrey fleet,
And a-nigh a mounted esquire in bright mail from crown
to feet ;
Then mounted that young maiden, and away, swift swift
away,
Over Galty's dreamy highlands like a flash of light went
they.

X.

The sunset sudden vanished, and a mighty vault instead,
Lit with many-tinted crystals high o'er their pathway
spread ;
Cavern spars gleamed all around them with the white
stars' silver flame,
Till they crossed th' Enchanted River, and to 'Tirnanoge
they came.

XI.

The maiden gazed with wonder on that world of beauty
bright,
With its green and heavenly mountains bathed all in
silver light,—
With its calm sky ever gleaming all in crystal sheen
above,
And its plains, bright streams, and valleys, where the
fairy dwellers rove.

XII.

It seemed unto the maiden scarce an hour had passed
away,
When they found a mighty falchion—beside their path
it lay.
“Take this falchion to my father,” said the maid :—“for
some old lore,
Some weird voice doth sudden tell me ’twill regain his
right once more.”

XIII.

Sped the esquire with the falchion to the exiled monarch
back,
And alone went forth the maiden on her silent heavenly
track,
Till beside a crystal river towered a diamond palace
sheen,
And, with all her court around her, there she found the
Fairy Queen.

XIV.

“By this fairy wand you gave me with its wonder-
working power,
Send me back, O radiant empress, to the world for one
short hour,—
Back to Dun Grod’s hoary fastness that my father I may
see,
And from dreary woe and sorrow I’ll bring him back
with me.”

XV.

"Few are they," said that bright empress, "who would
leave this land again ;
Yet go, and on thy swift course thou shalt have befitting
train."

Away the Munster princess and her fairy train are gone,
Through the green vales, through the bright plains,
through the cavern, to the sun !

XVI.

When she reached the green Earth's valleys from that
wondrous fairy zone,
'Stead of two short hours of gladness, ten long years
away had flown ! *
In the land were many changes ; 'twas the golden
summer time ;
And they asked a youthful peasant, " Who now reigns in
this sweet clime ? "

XVII.

" Duan reigns, our aged monarch ; he has slain th'
usurping lord,
And regained fair Munster's valleys by a mighty
conquering sword ;
But, O lovely lovely lady, are you come from Fairyland,
You look so bright and beauteous on this morning fresh
and bland ? "

XVIII.

The lady could not answer, so filled with joy was she ;
With her train of maids and gallants sped she on o'er hill
and lea,
Till she reached her father's palace where it stood by
Shannon's wave,
And joyful was the welcome that the gladsome monarch
gave.

* On this point see Joyce's *Smaller Social History of Ancient Ireland*, p. 126.

XIX.

Soon he led to his bright daughter a champion young and
tall,—

“This be he whose gallant father still was faithful in my
fall ;

Thou canst ne’er find champion braver, truer love thou
ne’er shalt find :

Wilt thou then return, as thou hast said, and leave him
and me behind ?”

XX.

On her father, on the champion, on her brilliant fairy
train,

She looked ; then said she’d ne’er return to Fairyland
again.

Bright was the nuptial morning, and happy was the
time,

When that princess and her champion reigned o’er the
Munster clime.

SONG OF TRÉN THE FAIRY.*

I.

FROM flower bells of ev’ry hue,

Crystal white or golden yellow,

We drink the honey-dew

Until we all get mellow,—

Until we all get mellow,

And through our festal glee

I’m the blithest little fellow } Repeat to
In the fairy companie. } suit the air.

* For the air, see Goodman’s School and Home Song Book,
p. 82. “Trén” is pronounced *Train*.

II.

In the fairy companie
 They call me Trén the Merry,
 For I love in revelry
 Each gloomy thought to bury,—
 Each dark sad thought to bury,
 As I laugh by flower and tree,
 Hill and stream and river ferry, }
 'Mid the fairy companie. } Repeat.

III.

'Neath the sunset's crimson ray
 Cups of crystal wine we swallow ;
 Then my fairy mates are gay,
 And where'er I go they follow,—
 With laughter mad they follow,
 I dance so merrilie,
 Over hill and flower-starred hollow, }
 For the fairy companie. } Repeat.

IV.

There from bells of ev'ry hue,
 Crystal white or golden yellow,
 We drink the honey-dew,
 Until we all get mellow,—
 All laughing glad and mellow,
 And through our festal glee,
 I'm the blithest little fellow }
 In the fairy companie. } Repeat.

ROMANCE OF THE STONE COFFIN.

Knockbrone, also called Carrigeennamronety, the "Hill of the Millstones," is situated about two miles north of Kildorrery, on the confines of the counties of Cork and Limerick. Between it and Knockea there is a narrow and deep pass called Barna Derg, the Red Gap, now called Redchair (the "Bloody Pass" of the 7th verse). In a ridge of rocks running from the base to the summit of Knockbrone lies a small cave called by the people of the place *Seónra-Nora* [Shoamra-Nora], "Nora's Chamber." In this cave, according to the legend, a young woman named Nora hollowed out her coffin, and died as told in the ballad. "Cleena's Wave," the sea off the south coast of Cork: see page 28.

I.

THERE'S a hollow cave in dark Knockbrone ;
 It faceth to the golden west
 From the steep mountain's ridge of stone :
 Boulder and crag, around it strown,
 Its entrance from the wild winds save :
 And there of yore, in that lone cave,
 There lived the gentlest fairest maid
 From brown Slieve Bloom to Cleena's wave.

II.

In grey Kilmallock stands a tower,
 And there her lordly father dwelt
 Long long ago in pride and power.
 And ample was bright Nora's dower,
 And many suitors round her came ;
 Till one old chieftain pressed his claim ;
 A false and gloomy man was he,
 But high he stood in martial fame.

III.

Some curse was on her father then ;
He looked with scorn on her true love
For young Sir Redmond of the Glen.
They forced her to the shrine, and when
Within its sacred bound they staid,
The withered bridegroom—that fair maid—
You ne'er have seen and ne'er shall see
A bridal match so ill arrayed.

IV.

As they sat that eve at sunset red,
The bridegroom said, with bitter leer,
His own dear lady was not dead !
Alas, 'twas truth the old man said :
Then Nora started from her rest ;
And plunged a dagger in his breast ;
Then fled by glen and bower and tree,
Until she reached Knockbrone's wild crest.

V.

Remorseful, mad with grief and pain,
She passed that woeful summer night,
Till morn leapt o'er the hills again.
O, tears may gush like April rain,
Yet the heart's sorrow will not go ;
And Nora's grief, remorse, and woe
From her poor bosom would not flee,
Howe'er her bitter tears might flow.

VI.

Her food the wild herbs of the fell,
The cave her home for many a day,
Her drink a lone and rock-bound well.
At length she prayed—and legends tell
How God did hear her earnest prayer—
To die on that wild mountain there,
And leave for Heaven her misery,
Her sorrow, madness, and despair.

VII.

As by the cave one noon she sat,
Far looking towards her father's hall,
Crag round her grey and desolate,
She saw in burnished harness plate
Many fierce chargers spurn the grass :
Two armies, each in one bright mass,
Rushed into battle valiantly
Beneath her in the Bloody Pass.

VIII.

One chief she knew with fatal spear,
'Twas young Sir Redmond of the Glen,
Forth rushing in his wild career.
She saw—the foe's red banner near—
Where knight and kern lay strewn and killed,
Her brave young lover's blood was spilled ;
And there that hapless hour sat she,
The measure of her sorrows filled.

IX.

She took the huge dirk which had slain
That old and false and villain chief,
Red-cruised with its bloody stain :
A grey old crumbling stone had lain
Beside the cave for many a year,
“Of this,” she cried, “I'll make my bier,
And die where o'er my misery
No human eye can shed a tear !”

X.

Morn and noon and sunset red,
The lady plied that dagger strong,
Till she had scooped her narrow bed.
Now the sweet summer time was fled,
Its blooming flowers decayed and gone ;
And all forlorn, and weak, and wan,
There on an autumn eve sat she,
The last that o'er her misery shone.

XI.

She laid her on her bier of stone,
 And there beside that rocky cave
 She died in sorrow all alone ;
 Where, by the ridge of stern Knockbrone,
 The peasants found her lifeless clay,
 And bare her to the abbey grey.
 There sleeps she lowly, silently,
 Till mercy comes on Judgment Day.

THE NEW-MOWN HAY.

AIR: "Young Roger was a Ploughboy."*

I.

YOUNG Johnnie, in the autumn,
 To Limerick he came,
 And none knew what brought him,
 And none knew his name ;
 But he sat by Bessie Gray
 On that sunny autumn day,
 And he told her sweet romances 'mid the new-mown hay.
 Then O, for fields lighted
 By sweet autumn's ray,
 When fond vows are plighted
 'Mid the new-mown hay.

II.

Young Johnnie had his dwelling
 Down fast by the Lee,
 And in manly sports excelling,
 But few like him you'd see ;

* For which see Joyce's "Ancient Irish Music," p. 80.

And so thought Bessie Gray
Since that sunny autumn day
When he told her sweet romances 'mid the new-mown hay.
Then O, for fields lighted
By sweet autumn's ray,
When fond vows are plighted
'Mid the new-mown hay.

III.

Young Johnnie could remember
His vows and his flame ;
He came in December,
And all knew his name ;
And there was a wedding gay,
And the bride was Bessie Gray,
And all from these romances 'mid the new-mown hay.
Then O, for fields lighted
By sweet autumn's ray,
When fond vows are plighted
'Mid the new-mown hay.

THE PILGRIM.

I.

As I sat at the cross in the village, it was on a bright
summer day,
An old man came silently thither, was drooping and
bearded and grey ;
There was dust on his shoon and his garments, the sore
dust of many a mile ;—
“O, where are you going, grey pilgrim ? Come rest
'neath this green tree a while.”

II.

“May God’s holy blessing be on you, an hour from my
journey I’ll steal :
I have wandered from morning till noontide, and foot-
sore and weary I feel ;
I am going fast fast to the graveyard, and wish I may
reach it full soon,
Till under its green grass, untroubled, I sleep by my
Eileen Aroon.

III.

“Eileen was an Orangeman’s daughter, but deep was
her fondness for me ;
She dwelt where in glory and splendour broad Barrow
sweeps down to the sea :
She was fair as the roses of summer and mild as a May
morning bland ;
A maiden so bright in her beauty was never like her in
the land.

IV.

“Ah ! sorely and well I remember, it was in the year
Ninety-eight,
When peace from our land was uprooted and sad was the
poor peasant’s fate ;
I’d scarce numbered twenty fair summers, the blood ran
like fire in my veins,
And I rose with the rest for old Ireland to free her from
bondage and chains.

V.

“I had a strange power ’mong my neighbours,—my sires
had been chiefs in the land,—
And soon on the hills gathered round me a valiant, a
wild daring band.

Through many a brave fight I led them by lone cot and
strife-ruined hall,
Till a dark hour of doom saw me faithless to God and my
country and all.

VI.

“We had camped in a gorge of the mountains; the red-
coats and yeomen were near :
I said, ‘If I wait for the morning her sire will encounter
me here ;
Can I calm the dark foeman who hates me, with love for
his child pure and bright ?
Can I spare him in battle’s mad fury ?’—I fled from my
comrades that night !

VII.

“I fled like a deer through the mountains to the home
of my Eileen Aroon ;—
Ah, great God of glory and mercy, the black fate that
met us so soon !
She lay in her grave-clothes, down-stricken by a death-
sickness sudden and sore,
And my name was the name of a traitor and my bright
hopes were quenched evermore.

VIII.

“From the old pilgrim places around me to grey holy
Derg of the Lake,
Since that wild time of trouble and vengeance my slow
yearly pathway I take ;
And I pray that my sins be forgiven, by many a lone
ruined wall,
And I sleep,—but I’ll soon sleep beside her, the long
sweetest slumber of all.”

IX.

Then mournful stood up that old pilgrim, and mournful
took me by the hand,—

“The blessings of love be upon you, and freedom and
peace in the land !”

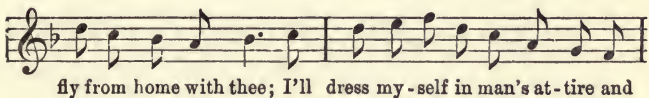
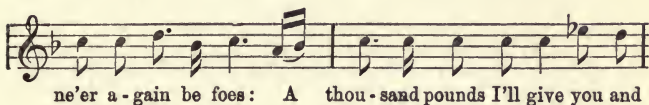
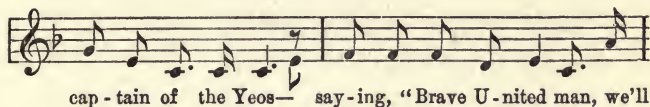
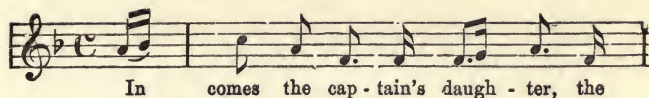
Then he drank at the spring in the village and silently
went on his way :—

May God and His mercy go with him, a sure prop by
night and by day !

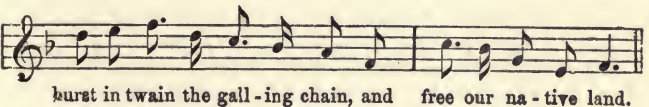
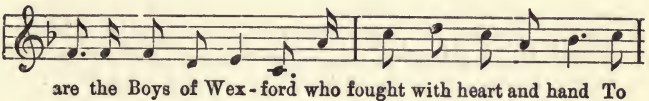
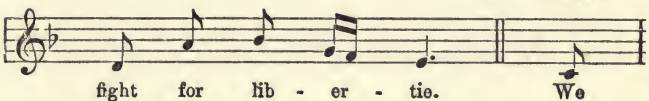
THE BOYS OF WEXFORD.

This ballad is correct in its topography and historical allusions. An account of all the battles mentioned here will be found in any good History of Ireland, or in a History of the Rebellion of Ninety-eight. The ballad is founded on an old Wexford folk song, very familiar all over the south of Ireland in my young days, when my brother and myself learned both air and words by merely hearing them sung in our home. He has incorporated in his ballad two verses of the original, little changed. The words are supposed to have been uttered by a Wexford peasant immediately after the Rebellion, in which he took part ; and in this respect they follow out the idea of the old folk song.

I think it worth while to give here the proper air of this song, the fine martial air to which the Wexford people always sang their old folk song “The Boys of Wexford,” as it was published by me for the first time in 1872, in my “Ancient Irish Music,” p. 27. The air to which Mr. Ludwig has recently set the song he found in Hoffmann’s edition of a portion of Petrie’s Ancient Music of Ireland, p. 50, where it is given without a name. Hoffmann does not give the name of the person from whom Petrie got it, or the part of the country it came from : the air is simply given, and we are told nothing whatever about it. It is not the original air of “The Boys of Wexford,” though it is now familiar all over the country through Mr. Ludwig’s singing.



Chorus.



II.

And when we left our cabins, boys, we left with right
good will,
To join our friends and neighbours encamped on Vinegar
Hill ;
A young man from our ranks a cannon he let go ;
He slapped it into Lord Mountjoy—a tyrant he laid low.
We are the Boys of Wexford who fought with heart
and hand
To burst in twain the galling chain, and free our
native land.

III.

At Three Rocks and Tubberneering how well we won the
day,
Depending on the long bright pike, and well it worked
its way :
At Wexford and at Oulart we made them quake with
fear ;
For every man could do his part, like Forth and Shelma-
liere.
We are the Boys of Wexford who fought with heart
and hand
To burst in twain the galling chain, and free our
native land.

IV.

My curse upon all drinking—'twas that that brought us
down ;
It lost us Ross and Wexford, and many another town.
And if for want of leaders we lost at Vinegar Hill,
We're ready for another fight and love our country still.
We are the Boys of Wexford who fought with heart
and hand
To burst in twain the galling chain, and free our
native land.

SIR DONALL.

I.

AFAR in the vales of green Houra* my heart lingers all the
day long,
'Mid the dance of the light-footed maidens, with the music
of Ounanaar's song,†
Where the steep hills uprise all empurpled with the
bloom of the bright heather bells,
Looking down on their murmuring daughters, the blue
streams of Houra's wild dells.
In the hush of a calm summer sunset where sing these
sweet streams as they flow,
As I sat with the blithe youths and maidens they made
me their bard long ago;
Then I told of each valley some legend, some tale of
each blue mountain crest,
But they loved of all old tales I sang them the lay of
Sir Donall the best.
So I'll sing once again of his deeds in my boyhood's
rude measures and rhymes,—
Then, gentles, all list to the story, this lay of old
chivalrous times:—

* Houra: the Ballyhoura Mountains, extending eastwards from Charleville, Co. Cork. The author of these poems was born, and passed his early life, in Glenosheen, situated in a romantic valley in the heart of the Ballyhoura Mountains.

† Ounanaar, the Glenanaar (or Ogeen, or Glenmore) river, rising in the Ballyhoura Mountains and falling into the Aubeg or Mulla, near Doneraile.

II.

Nigh the shores of the swift flowing Bregoge,* on a rock
 tow'ring over the wold,
 Walled in by the rough steepes of Houra, there standeth
 a grey feudal hold ;
 It is worn by the hard hail of battle, decay is at work
 on its hill,
 Yet it stands like a sorrow-struck Titan, high, lone, and
 unconquerable still.
 The green ivy clingeth around it, the blast is at play in
 its halls,
 The weasel peeps out from its crannies, the black raven
 croaks on its walls ;
 The peasants who pass in the evening will hurry their
 steps from its height,
 For they tell fearful things of its chambers and call it
 the Tower of the Sprite.†
 But its bleak ruined halls once rang merry with wassail
 and minstrel's sweet lay,
 When it sheltered the youthful Sir Donall, its lord in the
 good olden day.

III.

Sir Donall was first in the chase, and as morning
 upsprang from the sea,
 He was out by the fay-haunted streams with his falcons
 in woody Fer-muighe ;‡

* Bregoge, a mountain torrent rising in the Ballyhoura hills and falling into the Aubeg near Doneraile. It is celebrated—in conjunction with the Mulla or Aubeg—by Spenser in his poem “Colin Clouts come home again.”

† Castlepook, “the castle of the pooka or sprite,” near Doneraile, stands to this day a black stern-looking lonely ruin: a very fitting home for the Pooka.

‡ Fermuighe, now the barony of Fermoy; pronounced Fermwee, to rhyme with “sea.”

Or away, far away 'mid the mountains, with stag-hound
and bugle and steed,
Overmatching the grey wolf in boldness, outstripping the
red deer in speed.
And his heart and his strong hand were bravest, when
high rose the trumpet's wild strain,
When the war-fires blazed red on the hill-tops and the
horsemen rode hard on the plain,
When dight in his harness and spurring to the Desmond's
bright banner away,
His mountaineers dashing behind him with sabres athirst
for the fray.
On the field, in the home, he was welcomed ; and the
dames of the crag castles tall
Were proud when he smiled on their daughters at eve in
the gay festive hall.

IV.

'Tis noon on the broad plain of Limerick and down by
the calm Loobagh's tide,*
The sunbeams smite hot on the meadows and burn by
the green forest side ;
And brightly they glint from a helmet and broadly they
gleam from a shield,
Where a knight rideth up by the river in brave shining
panoply steeled.
Kern† crouch on his path in the greenwood with pikes
ready raised for a foe ;
But they know the high mien of Sir Donall and stay for
some Saxon the blow ;

* Loobagh, the crooked or winding river—the stream that runs
by Kilmallock.

† Kern, a light-armed foot-soldier ; Galloglass, a heavy-armed
foot-soldier.

And the galloglass scowls from his ambush ; but he too
 remembers that plume,
 And wishing good luck to its owner, strides back to his
 lair in the gloom.
 But why rides Sir Donall so lonely ? and why is his
 gladness all fled ?—
 On a field by Lough Gur's lonely water* the friend of his
 bosóm lies dead.

v.

Away then away to the mountains he giveth his war-
 horse the rein,
 While he longs for the clangour of battle to drown his
 dejection again ;
 The blest Hill of Patrick† slopes green with its tall hoary
 tower on his way,
 But the good monk who waits in the abbey in vain
 looketh out for his stay ;
 And anon the Black Rock of the Eagle frowns down on
 his path by Easmore,
 Till he crosseth the slow Oun-na-Geeragh, and windeth
 away from its shore.
 Now nigh him Seefin riseth proudly o'er wild Gleno-
 sheen's ancient wood ;
 He glances at bright Lyre-na-Grena and drinks of its
 cool crystal flood,

* Lough Gur, a lake near Bruff, Co. Limerick.

† *Ard Patrick*—the Height of St. Patrick—is a beautiful green hill at the Limerick side of the Houras. On its summit is an ancient church, the time of whose foundation is unknown. Near the church are the remains of a round tower which was blown down by a storm about a century ago. This hill is, and always was, grassy to the top, while all the hills rising over and near it are dark with heather. Accordingly the old pagan name *Finntuluch*, "White Hill," was correctly descriptive.

Then sweeps through the dark Poulafiaikin and on by a
flat moorland side,
Till he lights nigh a clear fairy fountain at length by the
Ounanaar's tide.*

VI.

It is on a small shrubby islet, with forests and cliffs all
around,
Save where the bright stream from the blue hills leaps
down with a low lulling sound ;
And it seems as if step of nought human did e'er on its
low strand alight ;
Yet a lady peers out from the thicket anear the good
steed of the knight.
She is old, yet there's fire in her dark eye, but sorrow is
stamped on her mien,
And she knows the tall crest of Sir Donall and comes to
his side from the screen ;
She waveth her hand to him sadly ; he follows her steps
by the flood,
Till they enter a hut of thick brambles concealed in the
dark spreading wood,
And there, on a rude couch of green fern, an old dying
chieftain is laid,
And over him bitterly weeping, there bendeth a golden-
haired maid.

* Blackrock towers over the right as you go from Ardpatrik to Glenosheen, under which is Easmore (pp. 8, 62): Irish name *Dubh-Charraig an iolair* [Doocarrig-an-iller] "Black-rock of the eagle." Down to a century ago eagles had their nests on the perpendicular face of the cliff. Lyre-na-Grena, "Sunny Glen," on the south-east side of Seefin Mountain. Poulafiaikin, or Poulafiaikeen, the high pass leading from Glenosheen to Glenanaar, with Knockea hill on the left, and the Long Mountain on the right. The Ounnageeragh river has one of its head waters in Lyre-na-freaghaun under Blackrock. Seefin and Glenosheen are correctly described above.

VII.

He turns to the knight as he enters, and thus in weak accents of woe :—
 “Thy sire was my friend, good Sir Donall, in the days of our youth long ago ;
 The Saxons have scattered my people—alas, for that gloom-darkened hour,
 When they forced me to fly, weak and wounded, thus far from Duarrigle’s tower.*
 A friend—a friend treacherous and hollow—hath tracked me to Ounanaar’s side,
 And he swears on his sword to betray me or have this young maid for his bride ;
 Black Murrogh, false lord of Rathgoggan,† soon soon from thy wiles I am free ;
 But alas for the wife of my bosom, alas, my loved daughter, for thee !”
 He died on that eve, and they bore him away to the age-honoured spires
 Of grey Kilnamullagh‡ next noontide, and laid him to rest with his sires.

VIII.

There was feasting that night in Kilcolman,§ and all in their bright martial gear,
 Black Murrogh and fearless Sir Donall and many stout champions are there ;

* Duarrigle, an ancient castle near Kanturk, Co. Cork, a seat of the O’Keeffes.

† Rathgoggan, the Irish name of Charleville, Co. Cork.

‡ Kilnamullagh, now Buttevant.

§ Kilcolman Castle, near Castlepook (Sir Donall’s home), and near Buttevant and Doneraile. See “The Burning of Kilcolman,” farther on.

And there speaks Sir Donall, uprising, and bends on
black Murrogh his gaze :—

“List ye, freres of the feast and the battle, to a tale of
the wild forest maze.

As I rode by the Ounanaar’s water, Duarrigle’s chieftain
I found ;

He was driven from his home by the Saxons, and said,
ere he died of his wound :

‘A friend—a friend treacherous and hollow—has tracked
me to Ounanaar’s side,—

A friend who has sworn to betray me or have my young
daughter his bride !’

By my faith he’s a bold knightly traitor, to woo her with
ardour so brave ;

Now there lies my gauntlet before him : thus proof of his
passion I crave !”

IX.

Then up starts the lord of Rathgoggan and fierce is the
flash of his eye,

As he glares on the dark brows around him with bearing
defiant and high :

“False knight of a silly young maiden, thy gauntlet I
take from the board,

And soon on thy crest in the combat I’ll prove my good
name with my sword ;

And I’ll clear a good path to my glory—a path through
that black heart of thine,

But fired by the love of young damsels, but steeled by
the red gushing wine ;

And close be the palisade round us and short be the
distance between,

Where a liar’s black life-blood shall poison the bloom of
the bright summer green !”

“And fair shine the sun,” quoth Sir Donall, “the bright
evening sun on my sword,

Defending Duarrigle’s maiden — avenging Duarrigle’s
lord !”

X.

Calm eve on the fair hills of Houra and down by the
Mulla's green marge,
The red beams are burning in glory from hauberk and
sabre and targe,
And the warriors are circling around it—that smooth
listed green by the wave—
Where two mailed champions are standing with keen axe
and target and glaive;
Flash lances around them in brightness, gleam banners
along by the shore,
Fierce Condon's from Araglin's water,* De Rupè's from
lordly Glenore;
And the Barry's proud pennon is waving, and the flags
of the chieftains whose towers
Defy from their crag-seats the foemen by Avonmore's
gorges and bowers;
Yet still the two champions stand moveless, stern,
frowning, and silent the while,
Like the panoplied statues that stand round the walls of
some grey abbey aisle.

XI.

But hark, how the clear martial trumpet outrolls the
dread signal for strife,
And see how those motionless statues outstart from their
postures to life!
The mailed heels go round on the greensward, the mailed
hands ply weapons amain,
Till the targes are battered and cloven and the axes are
shivered in twain.

* Araglin, a river joining the Blackwater near Fermoy.
Glenore, Glanworth in the same neighbourhood. Avonmore, the
Blackwater.

Wide and deep are the wounds of Sir Donall, but deeper
the gash of his foe,
As their sabres cross, gleaming and clashing—two flames
in the red sunny glow :
One thrust through the blood-spattered hauberk, one
stroke on the crest waving o'er,
And the lord of Rathgoggan lies fallen to rise to the
combat no more ;
And there, for a space, swaying, reeling, and faint from
his wounds' gushing tide,
Sir Donall looks down on the vanquished, then sinketh
in swoon by his side.

XII.

They bear one away to his tower and they bear one away
stark and cold ;
One ne'er may awake ; and one waketh, a bright blessed
scene to behold ;
For the maid of Duarrigle bendeth above the dim couch
where he lies,
With love as her spirit immortal and joy like the morn
in her eyes.
O, sweet are the dreams of his slumbers o'erflowing with
fairy delight,
But sweeter the dreams of his waking each day in the
Tower of the Sprite.
And now 'tis the fullness of summer,—a fair breezy
morning in June,—
And the streams of green Houra are leaping along with a
sweet murm'ring tune,
And thy bells, Kilnamullagh, are ringing—not knells of
the gloom-footed hours,
But the sweet bridal chimes of Sir Donall and the maid
of Duarrigle's towers.

THE BLIND GIRL OF GLENORE.*

I.

THE summer blooms around me,
Fields and streams and lovely bowers,
But I cannot see the glory
Of the meadows and the flowers ;
Once to me the golden summer
Was all one lapse of light,
Till the red red lightning struck me,
And withered up my sight.
Ah ! Donall, Donall,
Donall of Glenore,
Give me back the heart I gave you
In the sunny days of yore.

II.

Do you mind the sunlit meadow
Where the Funshion murmurs past,
Where you vowed one silent even
That your love should ever last ?
I have now no friends to love me—
In Molaga's† yard lie they—
And the blindness, O, this blindness
Is upon me night and day.
Ah ! Donall, Donall,
Donall of Glenore,
Give me back the heart I gave you
In the sunny days of yore.

* Glenore, now Glanworth on the Funshion. See p. 106.

† Molaga, a venerable little church ruin giving name to the parish of Templemolaga, on the river Funshion, two miles east of Kilderrery, Co. Cork. For St. Molaga, see Joyce's Irish Names of Places, vol. i., p. 152.

III.

They tell me in the village
That your heart to me is changed ;
But your words have never told me
That you wish to be estranged ;
Yet I will not cloud the gladness
Of a heart so kind and free—
O, this blindness, O, this blindness,
Sad the doom it brought to me.
Ah, Donall, Donall,
Donall of Glenore,
Give me back the heart I gave you
In the sunny days of yore.

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IV.

Donall took the hand of Nora
On a lovely morning-tide ;
He led her to the chapel
And he made her there his bride.
And to find a pair so happy
You should travel far and wide
As the blind maid and her Donall
By the Funshion's flowery side.
Ah, Donall, Donall,
Donall of Glenore ;
Still he loved her as he loved her
In the sunny days of yore.

EVELEEN.

AIR—"The wicked Kerryman."*

I.

FAR in the mountains with you, my Eveleen,
I would be loving and true, my Eveleen ;
Then climb the mountains with me.
Long have I dwelt by the forest river side.
Where the bright ripples flash and quiver wide ;
There the fleet hours shall blissful ever glide
O'er us, sweet Gra Gal Machree.

II.

There on my rocky throne, my Eveleen,
Ever, ever alone, my Eveleen,
I sit dreaming of thee ;
High on the fern-clad rocks reclining there,
Though the wild birds their songs are twining fair,
Thee I hear, and I see thy shining hair,
There, there, sweet Gra Gal Machree.

III.

Deeply in broad Kilmore,† my Eveleen,
Down by the clear stream's shore, my Eveleen,
I've made a sweet home for thee ;
Yellow and bright like thy long long flowing hair,
Flowers the fairest are ever blowing there,—
Fairer still with thy blue eyes glowing there,
Brightly, sweet Gra Gal Machree.

IV.

Then come away, away, my Eveleen ;
We will spend each day, my Eveleen,
Blissful and loving and free.
Come to the woods where the streams are pouring blue,
Singing in summer, in winter roaring through ;
I'll grow fonder each day adoring you,
There, there, sweet Gra Gal Machree.

* For which see Joyce's "Ancient Irish Music," p. 54.

† Kilmore, a district near Mallow and Buttevant, Co. Cork.

THE ENCHANTED WAR-HORSE.

I.

Doon* hangs above the ocean clear,
With old embattled towers,
And rears its grey head, stern and drear,
O'er inland streams and flowers ;
Deserted now for many a year,
While the sun shines on the roses ;
And the laugh of man shall never more
Resound within its chambers hoar,
While the waves roll by with thundering force,
Or the ocean calm reposes ;
While the linnet sings on the golden gorse,
And the sun shines on the roses.

II.

The fairies dance on Doon's grey hill,
When the midnight moon shines brightly,
Or far below by its forest rill,
With many a prank full sprightly ;
They foot it too and dance their fill,
When the sun shines on the roses,
On the glade within its forest maze,
Where the flowers with light are all ablaze,
Where the stream along its glittering course
Its many charms discloses,
And the linnet sings on the golden gorse,
And the sun shines on the roses.

* Doon Castle, now in ruins, stands exactly as the ballad describes it—on the edge of a cliff over the Atlantic—beside Doon Point at the mouth of the Shannon, a mile and a half north of Ballybunnion in Kerry.

III.

A heavy tramp sounds through the copse,
Upon their sport advancing,
And now their gleesome laughter stops,
And all their merry dancing ;
And treading down the lusmore* tops,
A steed comes onward prancing—
A great grey steed with glossy back,
With crested mane of midnight black,
With archèd neck and mighty limb,
And bold eyes glittering ever ;
Where frowned that castle hoar and grim,
And sang the woodland river.

IV.

They look into his great black eyes,
That gaze on them with wonder,
And now they talk in wild surprise,
And now they pause and ponder.
At length a gallant elf-knight cries,
“ Out from the castle yonder,
We’ll bring the trappings that we found
Deep in the chamber under ground,
And with them send this steed of might,
A master seeking ever ! ”
Where frowned that castle on the height,
And sang the woodland river.

V.

With laugh and shout away they go,
And up the steep rocks clamber ;
They heed not that the sea below
Lies stretched like golden amber ;

* Lusmore, the “ fairy-thimble ” : foxglove : *digitalis* : a fairy herb of mighty power.

They were too busy far, I trow,
For from the haunted chamber
They've brought the harness forth, and braced
The saddle bright with silver chased,
The haunch-plates, breast-plate, forehead boss,
And rein of golden glory,
Where the woodland stream sang through the moss,
And frowned that castle hoary.

VI.

They hung beside the saddle sheen
A helm and pair of lances,
The best that e'er in war were seen,
Or heard of in romances;
And then they capered round the green,
And then, with merry glances,
Upon the steed strange spells they laid,
And dancing round him in the glade,
Said, "Go thou forth, thou gallant horse,
And find what fate discloses;
While the linnet sings on the golden gorse,
And the sun shines on the roses!"

VII.

The steed sped down the forest straight,
And came to a lordly castle,
Where all were, noon and night, elate
With wine and roaring wassail;
A jolly knight came from the gate,
Bedecked with plume and tassel,
And sprang upon his back, but there
Soon went he flying through the air,
And down on earth with broken bones.
In grief and woe to languish,
And found that sermons lie in stones
Of bitter pain and anguish.

VIII.

Next by a castle grim and bare
That great steed's hoofs came clanging,
Where rose the puritanic prayer
And hymns with nasal twanging ;
Its lord came down the castle stair,
His godly bosom banging,
And sprang upon the horse's back,
But soon went prone into the black
Deep moat, where oft his holy steel
Strewed poor malignants' corpses,
And found his puritanic zeal
Was most unfit for horses.

IX.

By tower and street, the country round,
By many a hall of pleasure,
He sped, but every rider found
Wanting in some sad measure.
One was a miser whom he drowned,
For all his bags of treasure ;
One was a knave that sold his cause,
And one a bloody tyrant was ;
Another was a false mean hack,
Of false men's views the ranter ;
But all, as each one gained his back,
He hurled to earth instanter.

X.

At last by lone Cragbarna's side,
A region Ossianic,
Where none but outlaws dared abide,
'Mid rugged rocks volcanic,
As, proud and strong, the great steed hied,
Down from a crag Titanic
A young knight sprang—'twas John the Brown,
The banished lord of Barnaloun—

Sprang on his back, and stuck thereon
As firm as any Persian.
Cried he, as brightly shone the sun,
“ Ah, now comes brave diversion ! ”

XI.

The great steed plunged and reared amain,
To cause some dire disaster—
Across the crags did wildly strain,
And down the steep gorge faster ;
But every ruse he tried in vain :—
At length he'd found his master ;
He'd found a champion brave and true,
Whose heart no foul dishonour knew,
Whose sword was drawn to sweep each curse
Away that wrong imposes,
While the linnet sang on the golden gorse,
And the sun shone on the roses.

XII.

And gayly cried Sir John the Brown,
As like a lamb, or tamer,
The steed at last trode mildly down ;
“ O, now I'm free to name her,—
My ladye love of bright renown,—
To worship and to claim her
To be my bride, for with this fine
Brave steed I'll win what should be mine,
My native hall, my broad domain,
That every charm discloses,
While the linnet sings his merry strain.
And the sun shines on the roses.

XIII.

Then round he galloped eagerly,
And called up friend and vassal,
And drew them on the enemy
That held his native castle ;

And there all were eternally
 Immersed in wine and wassail,
 And knew not, heard not, till they saw
 Sir John the Brown his good sword draw
 Before the gate on that great horse,
 To slit their traitorous noses,
 While the linnet sang on the golden gorse,
 And the sun shone on the roses.

XIV.

Sir John the Brown his home hath won,
 And thrashed the foemen fairly :
 His ladye love of bright renown
 He made his bride full early.
 Both lord and lady now are gone ;
 Their castle looms all drearily,
 A ruin stark and lone: but still
 The peasant hears upon its hill
 The tramp of that great wizard horse,
 And will, as evening closes,
 While the linnet sings on the golden gorse,
 And the sun shines on the roses.

 THE SPALPEEN.

Spalpeens were labouring men—reapers, mowers, potato-diggers, etc—who travelled about in the autumn seeking employment from the farmers: each with his spade, or his scythe, or his reaping hook. Sometimes a young man of the higher class of farmers, disguised as a Spalpeen, joined the others, and went round and worked with them for a mere frolic.

I.

“ WHEN comes across the mountains the winter of the
 year,
 With merry jokes and laughter the spalpeens gay are here;
 I love the first of autumn, but more sweet Hallowe'en,
 For it brings me back my Connall, my rattling gay
 Spalpeen.

II.

“His hair is like the raven that flies above Knockrue,
And stately is his form, and his heart is kind and true,—
He’s the kindest, best, and bravest of all I’ve ever seen,
And until death I’ll love him, my rattling gay Spalpeen.

III.

“The first night that I met him I found him kind and
leal;
He took me for his partner and we tripped a mazy reel;
It was ‘The New-mown Meadows’ and then the light
Moneen,*
And I loved him since that pleasant night, my rattling
gay Spalpeen.”

IV.

The leaves of dying autumn by chilling winds were tost;
The corn was stacked securely, the hills were grey with
frost;
When by the turf fire blazing were met at Hallowe’en
The farmers’ sons and daughters and many a gay Spalpeen.

V.

The old man in the corner sat in his elbow-chair;
At all his jokes the laughter rose free from grief or care;
The Banatheet† sat smiling, and said she’d never seen
A dancer like young Connall, the rattling gay Spalpeen.

VI.

They’ve laughed round many an apple, they’ve burned
the nuts in glee,
“And some will soon get married, and some will sail the
sea!”‡

* Moneen, a kind of jig. For “The New-mown Meadows” see Joyce’s “Old Irish Folk Music and Songs.”

† The “Woman of the house.” Irish, *bean-a-tighe*.

‡ According to the portents of the burning nuts.

They've danced for th' ancient piper, they've joked and
sung between,
And told their wondrous legends, each rattling gay
Spalpeen.

VII.

Then Connall took the daughter, the eldest, by the
hand,—
It was his own sweet Eileen Bawn, the fairest in the land ;
He led her towards her parents with modest manly mien,
While all stood hushed around him, the rattling gay
Spalpeen.

VIII.

“I've come across the mountains far far from home, to
find
A girl above all others, both simple, fair, and kind ;
She's standing now beside me, the loveliest I have seen :”
So spoke, with gentle bearing, the rattling gay Spalpeen.

IX.

“I know she's good and constant—for me would give her
life ;
I have a happy home for her, and ask her for my wife.”
He's doffed the old grey garment—before them all is seen
The lord of many a townland, that rattling gay Spalpeen !

X.

Old Father James came early and blessed the loving pair ;
She's off with her dear bridegroom towards Kerry's hills
so fair ;
O'er many a fertile valley she reigns just like a queen,
Loving, and loved by, Connall, her rattling gay Spalpeen.

THE BATTLE OF THE RAVEN'S GLEN.

O'Sullivan prince of Beare and Bantry (in West Cork) during his retreat from Glengariff to the North in the winter of 1602-3, was attacked on his way by many enemies, but defeated them all. But of 1000 followers who left Glengariff with him, less than 100 reached their destination: the rest had either been killed in the various skirmishes, or had fallen behind on the way. One of his camping places was beside Ardpatrik, near the scene of the battle described here. (For a full account of this remarkable retreat, read A. M. Sullivan's *Story of Ireland*, or Joyce's *History of Ireland*.)

"The Raven's Glen" is a fancy name—an attempted translation—for "Lyre-na-freaghaun," a deep, dark, heath-clad glen under Blackrock, near Kilfinane (see p. 103). The author had an account of this skirmish only from local oral tradition: the Records make no mention of it.

I.

FROM the halls of his splendour by Bantry and Beare,
From his turrets that look o'er the silver Kinmera,*
With his band of brave warriors O'Sullivan bore him,
Till the mountains of Limerick rose darkly before him;
There he camped on the heath where the deep pools
were paven
With the stars of the night, in the Glen of the Raven.

II.

In that glen was no sound save the murmur of fountains,
And the moonbeams were silvering the thunder-split
mountains;

* Kinmera, Kenmare Bay.

When a horse-tramp was heard from the Ounanaar's
water,
Sounding down from the gorge of the dark Vale of
Slaughter ;*
And the rider ne'er reined till his long plume was waven
By the breezes that sighed through the Glen of the Raven.

III.

Up sprang from the heather the chieftains around him,
And they asked where the foe 'mid the moorlands had
found him ;
For they knew he had passed through the battle's fierce
labour,
From the foam o'er his steed and the blood on his sabre ;
While the rocks with the hoofs of their chargers were
graven,
As they pranced into lines in the Glen of the Raven.

IV.

'Twas the scout of lone Bregoge :† he'd heard in the
gloaming
Fierce yells o'er that rough torrent's roaring and foaming ;
Then a dash and a shout and a rushing did follow,
For the foe burst around him from hillside and hollow ;
But a road to his chief through their ranks he had claven—
Now he stood by his side in the Glen of the Raven.

* That is "Glenanaar," which means "Vale of Slaughter." The "gorge" from which the scout was descending was Poulafaikeen, for which see p. 103. Through Glenanaar flows the Ounanaar, or Ogeen, or Glenmore river, crossed at one place by an old ford called Ahasullus, the Ford of Light. (For which see Joyce's *Irish Names of Places*, vol. i.) There is a legend that the Clann Morna were defeated here by the Ossianic tribe of Clann Baskin.

† Bregoge : see page 100.

V.

Up started Black Hugh from his couch by the fountain,
The outlaw of Darra* from Brone's rugged mountain.
"There's a passage," he said, "over Ounanaar's water,
Where Clann Morna of old were defeated with slaughter;
There bide we the steps of the traitor and craven,
And he ne'er shall come down through the Glen of the
Raven."

VI.

The ambush was set in the Passage of Lightning,
And now in the moonlight sharp weapons came brighten-
ing,
The lance of the Saxon from Mulla and Mallow,
And the pike of the kern from the wilds of Duhallow:
Soon they clash with the swords of the men of Bear-
haven,†
Who now slowly retreat to the Glen of the Raven.

VII.

Then O'Sullivan burst like the angel of slaughter,
On the foe by the current of Geeragh's wild water,‡
And his brave men of Cork and of Kerry's wild regions
Were the rushing destroyers, his death-dealing legions;
And onward they rode over traitor and craven,
Whose bones long bestrewed the lone Glen of the Raven.

VIII.

All silent again over forest and mountain,
Save the voice in that glen of Ossheen's ancient fountain;
While O'Sullivan's crest with its proud eagle feather,
And broadswords and pikes glitter now from the heather;
For where the dark pools with the bright stars are paven,
Secure rests the clan in the Glen of the Raven.

* Darra lies at the foot of Brona or Knockbrone. See pp. 74, 81.

† Men of Bearhaven: O'Sullivan's men: the ambush party.

‡ Geeragh: see note, p. 103.

MAUD OF DESMOND.

I.

DREAMS a knight that ne'er again
Shall Maud of Desmond wake to love :
That she hath fled from grief and pain
Away to Heaven's bright fields above—
Never more shall wake to love,
So dreams that knight by a streamlet narrow ;
'Tis far down in the summer grove,
By the dancing tide of the murmuring Carrow.*

II.

Who is he with looks of pain,
That dreams beneath the branches there ?
The dark-haired knight of Castlemaine,†
Of the active frame and the manly air.
His brow is clouded now with care ;
They pierce his heart—those dreams—and harrow,
And he starteth up from his mossy lair
By the dancing tide of the murmuring Carrow.

III.

Maud of Desmond loved him true,
But, ah, her princely father smiled
On a stranger lord who came to woo
That bonnie maid so pure and mild.
That young knight broods with bitter smile,
For memory came like a poisoned arrow ;
And he dashed away on his charger wild
From the dancing tide of the murmuring Carrow.

* Carrow, a stream near Croom, Co. Limerick.

† Castlemaine, in Kerry.

IV.

Maud of Desmond makes her moan
For her hapless love in her native bowers :
The grand eve from its golden throne
Is marshalling its crimson powers :
The fields beneath are starred with flowers,
The stream runs calm where the aspens quiver ;
It is where Crom's embattled towers *
Are mirrored in the Maigne's bright river.

V.

She sees a knight come from the West
Down the woody vale in fiery speed,
And well she knows his helmet crest
And the stately step of his noble steed ;
It is her own true knight, I rede,
Who comes a last farewell to give her,
And he sits beside her in the mead,
That summer eve by the Maigne's bright river.

VI.

And soon the knight's farewell is told,
And sad he turns to the hills away :
But who, advancing from the wold,
Now bars his path to their summits grey ?
It is the stranger lord :—All day
He'd chased the roe where the wild woods quiver
To the bugle's note and the staghound's bay,
In the summer dells by the Maigne's bright river.

VII.

He stands upon the woodland path,
Grim glowering on the western knight,
And meeting in their hate and wrath,
They close in stern and deadly fight ;

* Crom or Croom castle, in the Co. Limerick, situated on the river Maigne, was the chief residence of the Earls of Desmond. It now belongs to the Lyons family of Cork.

There in the reddening sunset light
Their keen swords into fragments shiver,
And they draw their daggers sharp and bright
For that lady's love by the Maigue's bright river.

VIII.

But see ! In that fierce and bitter strife,
The stranger lord goes down, and there,
With outstretched hands, he begs for life,—
And the young knight listens to his prayer :
He speaks with a calm and lordly air :
“ I give thy life, but shun thou the giver,
And shun the paths of this lady fair
For evermore by the Maigue's bright river ! ”

IX.

“ By the towers of Crom ! ” Earl Desmond cries—
For he saw the fight from his castle wall—
“ Such valour still my heart will prize,
Till death upon its throbbings fall ;
Come, spread the banquet in the hall ;
The brave should have their meed for ever ! ”
And he brings the knight to his festival,
In castled Crom by the Maigue's bright river.

X.

There was a mighty feast that e'en,
And a bridal train next morning tide ;
And joyful was the young knight's mien
With Maud of Desmond at his side.
And she was a happy happy bride,
With all that power and love could give her,—
The fairest bride in that region wide,
In castled Crom by the Maigue's bright river.

THE RED ROSE AND THE WHITE.

I.

THE Red Rose to the White Rose spake
Within the garden fair :—
“ O sister, sister, I shall make
A garland for her hair—
A garland for my lady gay
In spring-time of the year,
And she shall bloom ere next blithe May,
A bride without a peer.”

II.

“ List ye, my sister,” said the White,
“ Perchance 'tis I may rest
Among her locks of golden light,
And on her gentle breast,—
Her breast that's like my pearly leaves
In spring-time of the year,
For Nature also works and weaves
Sad garlands for a bier.”

III.

“ Now, cease thy boding voice of woe ! ”
The Red Rose cries again :
“ See where in pride of beauty's glow
Forth walks she with her train ;
Bright as the morn all glittering
In spring-time of the year :
Can death e'er strike so fair a thing,
That maid without a peer ? ”

IV.

When flowers were smiling through the land,
In glen and forest tall,
Young Lady Anne looked down the strand,
From Mallow's castle wall ;

And there she saw Lord Thomas stand,
In spring-time of the year,
Her own young knight, with hawk on hand,
That morning mild and clear.

V.

"Come down, come down, O lady sweet,
We'll range the greenwoods fair,
With hawk and hound and courser fleet,
To chase the timid nare ;
To rouse the pheasant from the woods
In spring-time of the year,
And start the heron where she broods
'Mid sedges tall and sere."

VI.

She's mounted on the gallant bay,
And he upon the black ;
They've hunted all the livelong day
Through glen and forest track ;
They're resting now 'neath a hawthorn spray,
In spring-time of the year,
Beside Queen Cleena's rock so gray,*
With foliage rustling near.

VII.

Across her face a cold blast blew—
'Twas sent by some dark fay—
It blighted her though no one knew,
That sweet and sunny day.
Yet glad she rode towards Mallow's wall
In spring-time of the year,
And blithely sat she in the hall
Beside her lover dear.

* Carrigcleena, where the fairy queen Cleena has her palace :
five miles from Mallow : see note, p. 32.

VIII.

At eve they made the altar bright
For morning's bridal train ;
But Lady Anne slept sound that night
And never woke again.
The Red Rose it was dead and gone
In spring-time of the year ;
The White Rose 'mid her bright locks shone,
And decked her mournful bier.

IX.

"She died not !"—still the peasants say—
"But in Queen Cleena's hall
She lives with elf-maids bright and gay,
The fairest of them all ;
Each night upon her gallant bay,
In spring-time of the year,
She rideth round that rock so grey,
In the ghostly moonlight clear !"*

* Cleena had an evil reputation for abducting handsome young women and men, and often beautiful children. See the ballad, p. 28, where it is related how she carried off the young earl Gerald FitzGerald. Edward Walsh makes the lover of "O'Donovan's Daughter" say :—

"God grant 'tis no fay from Knockferna that woos me,
God grant 'tis not Cleena the queen that pursues me !"

THE BURNING OF KILCOLMAN.

Kilcolman castle, a very picturesque ruin, at one time the residence of the poet Spenser, lies at the base of the Ballyhoura Hills, on the shore of a small lake, three miles from Buttevant in the County Cork, and the same distance from Doneraile. It originally belonged to the earl of Desmond, and was burned by his followers in 1598 (during the O'Neill war) while Spenser had it. The poet, who was one of the settlers on Desmond's confiscated lands, narrowly escaped with his life: but his infant child, unwittingly left behind, was burned to death.

I.

No sound of life was coming
 From glen or tree or brake,
 Save the bittern's hollow booming
 Up from the reedy lake;
 The golden light of sunset
 Was swallowed in the deep,
 And the night came down with sullen frown
 On Kilcolman's massive keep.

II.

And Houra's hills are soundless:
 But hark, that trumpet blast!
 It fills the forest boundless,
 Rings round the summits vast:
 'Tis answered by another
 From the crest of Corrinmore,*
 And hark again the pipe's wild strain
 By Bregoge's caverned shore.

* Corrinmore or Carron, a mountain rising over Charleville and Buttevant: one of the Ballyhoura range, visible from Kilcolman. Bregoge river near Kilcolman: see page 100 "Bregoge's caverned shore" is correctly descriptive.

III.

In the castle hearts are beating ;
While through the mountain pass,
By lake and river meeting,
Came kern* and galloglass,
Breathing vengeance deep and deadly
Under the forest tree,
To the wizard man who cast the ban
On the minstrels bold and free.†

IV.

They gave no word of warning,
Silent they came, and on,
Gate, wall, and rampart scorning :
But the wizard bard was gone !
Gone fast and far that even
All secret as the wind,
His treasures all in that castle tall,
And his infant son behind !

V.

Now round that castle hoarest
Their pipes and horns were still,
While gazed they o'er the forest
Up glen and sloping hill ;
Till from the mystic circle‡
On Corrin's crest of stone,
A sheet of fire like an Indian pyre
Up to the clouds was thrown.

* Kern, a light-armed foot-soldier. Galloglass, a heavy-armed foot-soldier.

† Spenser denounced the Irish bards in his writings.

‡ On the summit of Corrinmore there is a great circular cairn.

VI.

Then, with a rival blazing,
They answered—to the sky :
It dazzled their own gazing,
So bright it rolled and high ;
The castle of the Poet,—
The man of endless fame,—
Soon hid its head in a mantle red
Of fierce and rushing flame.

VII.

Out burst the vassals, praying
For mercy as they sped—
“Where is your master staying ?”
“Our master :—He has fled !”
But hark ! that thrilling screaming
Over the crackling din,—
’Tis the Poet’s child in its terror wild,
The blazing tower within !

VIII.

There was a warlike giant
Amid the circling throng,
He looked with face defiant
On the flames so wild and strong ;
Then rushed into the castle,
And up the rocky stair,
But alas, alas, he could not pass
To the burning infant there.

IX.

The wall was tottering under,
And the flames were whirling round ;
The wall went down in thunder
And dashed him to the ground ;
Up in the burning chamber
For ever died that scream,
And the fire sprang out with a wilder shout,
And a fiercer ghastlier gleam.

X.

It glared o'er hill and hollow
 Up many a rocky bar,
 From ancient Kilnamullagh*
 To Darra's peak afar ;
 Then it heaved into the darkness
 With a final roar amain,
 And sank in gloom with a whirring boom,
 And all was dark again.

THE WHITE LADYE.

Brugh [pron. Broo] is the old name of Bruff, Co. Limerick.

Glennaive—the “holy glen” (Irish *Gleann-naomh*)—is at the S.-E. base of Ardpatrik Hill, two miles west of Kilfinane Co. Limerick: its name of course connected with the long line of holy men who lived in the adjacent abbey on the summit of the hill (see p. 6). The new residence of the parish priest stands beside this venerable little glen—a very appropriate site.

Raheenroe—the “little red rath”—was near the fine modern residence, Clonodfoy (three miles from Kilfinane), which retains the name of the original fortress tower: but this old tower has long since disappeared.† I do not know if there are any remains of the old rath—in early life I knew it well—but at any rate its name “Raheenroe” (commonly shortened to “Raheen”) now designates a small townland adjoining the modern residence on the east, and within the demesne. The rath is called in the Ballad “The Red Rath of the Hill.” This hill is a grassy sharp-pointed eminence rising over Raheenroe and Clonodfoy, with a tall massive meaningless stone structure called “Oliver’s Folly” on its very summit, from which it is now called “Castle Hill.” But down to the last century the

* Kilnamullagh, Buttevant. Darra’s Peak, Carrigeennamronety: see p. 81.

† Clonodfoy, a shortening of the old Irish name *Cloch-an-flóid-bhuidhe*, the stone castle of the yellow sod or sward.

people called it Knockagarraunbaun, the "Hill of the White Horse."

In old times there was only one main road to and from Clonodfoy, which still exists; but the portion lying within the demesne—namely, from the Ballyorgan entrance to the Castle Oliver entrance—is now in great part disused. The present road from the Glenosheen-Fanningstown entrance lodge did not then exist; for one good reason, that the lake—mentioned below—lay right in the way.

In my young days that part of the old road—forming a fine avenue—between the Ballyorgan entrance and the *old* mansion* was—and is still I think—well known by the name of "Ballagh-a-thloo"—Irish *Bealach-a-tsluaigh*, the "road of the host." The word *sluagh* [sloo] is often applied to a fairy-host on march; and the name probably refers to the nightly excursions of the fairy inhabitants of the Little Red Rath—a form of belief common all over Ireland. But it may possibly commemorate the marches of the more substantial hosts from the original castle of *Cloch-an-fhóid-bhuidhe*. In this avenue, as you approach the old mansion (or rather its site), there is a sharp bend towards the right called "The Lady's Turn"; and I often heard the old people speak of it in connexion with a lady's ghost that haunted the spot—probably the White Ladye of the ballad. This "Lady's Turn" was different from what is now called "The Ladies' Walk" near it—a walk which was made, and the name given to it, within my own memory. I remember well also that the part of the main Clonodfoy road immediately outside the demesne on the west, namely, that part running from the Castle Oliver entrance up the steep hill to the right and along the present demesne wall, was universally called the "Coach Road," probably preserving a memory of the numerous arrivals

* This old residence, which stood about a quarter of a mile west of the present Clonodfoy, was not the original Clonodfoy stone castle, but a later structure. It was a fine old mansion, and in good residential condition in my memory; but it was ruthlessly obliterated off the face of the earth by a vandal steward about sixty years ago, long before the place came into the present proprietor's hands.

and departures of the olden time. The short stretch between the Castle Oliver entrance and the old mansion was called *Boher-glas*, the "Green Road."

The little river flowing in the valley near and below Clonodfoy was called the "Gairha," which means "a wild shrubby place along a river"; from which this part of the demesne was—and is still—called "The Wilderness." (See my *Names of Places*, vol. i., p. 497.) The bottom of the valley along which this sluggish stream now runs was in former times covered by a narrow shallow lake about two miles in length, along the dead-level river-bed, called *Loch Bo*, the "Lake of the Cows," which figures in ancient Irish literature.* The lake was formed by two obstructions, which prevented the water-flow; one at the east end a little above Ballyorgan bridge—an accumulation of gravel brought down by the floods of the Lyre-na-Grena stream—the other at the west end: and it was drained off at some former time by simply making cuttings through the two obstructions—cuttings which remain to this day.† When I was a boy old Jack Dinan of Glenosheen and of Raheenroe, in whose time considerable portions of the lake still remained, often spoke of Lough Bó, the name of which was quite familiar to him. The water left a bog in which I remember seeing turf cut year after year: and indeed until very recently—within my own memory—there were still some considerable pools remaining at the western end—specially large and noticeable in winter.

P. W. J.

I.

THE Baron of Brugh took his steel-grey steed,
And faced the mid-day sun;
And he'd gained Glennaive, so wild his speed,
Ere the noontide course was run.

* See Dr. Standish H. O'Grady's "*Silva Gadelica*," pp. 118 to 126. ("The Colloquy of the Ancient Men.") This lake—or rather the site of it—has never been identified till now.

† The ground formerly occupied by the western half of the lake is on the watershed, from which streams flow E. and W. respectively.

II.

He rode by Glennaive and near many a grave,
O'er that lone glen's sacred rill,
And he slacked not nor stayed, till he reached the green
glade
By the Red Rath of the Hill.

III.

As he rested by the lone Red Rath,
A charger's tramp heard he,
And riding nigh on the woodland path
Soon came the White Ladye.

IV.

She was no fairy of the place,
Though she shamed the fairies' speed ;
Milk-white her dress, pale pale her face,
And snow-white was her steed.

V.

The Baron leaped as a knight should leap,
All on to his saddle-tree,
And away away through the woods did sweep
After the White Ladye.

VI.

Till deep in the glen of Barnagee*
She turned her steed around,
And charged the Baron right valiantly,
As he went with an eager bound.

VII.

A long bright glaive in her hand she bore,
And she came like a knightly foe,
And the Baron she struck on the helm so sore
That he bent to his saddle bow.

* Barnagee, Barnageeha, the glen at the west side of the beautiful conical hill of Barnageeha or Ardnageeha, rising over the village of Ballyorgan.

VIII.

There came a rock in his charger's path,
As that furious course he ran,
And with headlong plunge and with kindled wrath,
To the ground went horse and man.

IX.

Never he rose from the rocky ground
Till the sunset o'er him shone,
Then he mounted his steed and he looked around,
But the White Ladye was gone.

X.

Ere waned the next moon's silver light
He sought that place agen,
And there he saw a sad sad sight
A-nigh the hollow glen.

XI.

There lay a dead knight in his path,
Cloven through crown and crest,
And the White Ladye near the lone Red Rath
With an arrow in her breast.

XII.

And over the Ladye the Baron stood,
As her life began to fail,
And ever as flowed the red red blood,
She told her woeful tale.

XIII.

"My father lived where yon grey tower
Frowns o'er the Champion's stream ;*
There fled my days since childhood's hour,
All like a pleasant dream.

* Champion's Stream : the Ounnageeragh : see note, p. 103.

XIV.

“This bridal dress, with my life-blood red,
One lovely morn I wore,
For I in gladness was to wed
The Master of Kilmore.

XV.

“The feast was spread, when in there sped
A young chief from Maiga’s side,
And his spearmen tall crowded porch and hall,
And he said he had come for the bride.

XVI.

“Up sprang vassal and knightly guest,
Each answering with a blow,
And soon was changed our bridal feast
To a scene of blood and woe.

XVII.

“I saw my father falling there,
And my love lie in his gore,
And in wild despair, I knew not where,
I fled through the wicket door.

XVIII.

“Soon soon I found my courser white,
And fled over vale and lea,
But ever still, since that fatal night,
That false chief follows me.

XIX.

“He chased me all this woeful morn,
He sent this arrow keen,
But never more to the battle borne
Shall his proud crest be seen.

XX.

“For ere I fell in this lonely dell,
 My steed leapt forth amain,
 And with this good sword of my dead young lord
 I cleft through the false knight’s brain.”

XXI.

Soon the Ladye died, and the Baron of Brugh
 Was a woeful wight that hour ;
 For the dead young knight was his brother Hugh,
 The lord of Crom’s dark tower.*

SONG OF GALLOPING O’HOGAN.†

AIR : “He thought of the Charmer.”‡

I.

HURRAH, boys, hurrah ! for the sword by my side,
 The spur and the gallop o’er bogs deep and wide ;
 Hurrah for the helmet and shining steel jack,
 The sight of the spoil and good men at my back !
 And we’ll sack and burn for king and sireland,
 And chase the black foe from old Ireland.

II.

At the wave of my sword start a hundred good men,
 And we ride like the blast over moorland and glen ;
 Like dead leaves of winter, in ruin and wrath,
 We sweep the red Saxons away from our path.
 And we’ll sack and burn for king and sireland,
 And chase the black foe from old Ireland.

* Croom on the river Maigue : see p. 123.

† A celebrated Rapparee leader (1690) : for whom see p. 12.

‡ For which see Joyce’s Old Irish Folk Music and Songs.

III.

The herds of the foe graze at noon by the rills ;
 We have them at night in our camp on the hills :
 His towns lie in peace at the eve of the night,
 But they're spoiled and in flames ere the next morning
 light.

And we'll sack and burn for king and sireland,
 And chase the black foe from old Ireland.

IV.

And so we go riding by night and by day,
 And fight for our country and all the rich prey;
 The roar of the battle sweet music we feel,
 And the light of our hearts is the flashing of steel.
 And we'll sack and burn for king and sireland,
 And chase the black foe from old Ireland.

 THE STORMY SEA SHALL FLOW IN.

AIR: "Each night when I slumber."*

I.

THE stormy sea shall flow in,
 Our highland valleys through,
 Ere I, my faithful Owen,
 Prove false to love and you.
 My heart was sad and lonely,
 Each weary night and day,
 Till your kind accents only
 Have chased my grief away.

II.

For my dear mother left me—
 Cold cold in death she lies—
 Ah, how drear fortune reft me
 Of all my heart could prize !

* For which see Joyce's Old Irish Folk Music and Songs.

My father far would wander
Unto some foreign zone,
And I was left to ponder
Upon my grief alone.

III.

Then came a sure sweet token
Such sorrows might not last :
In joy you ne'er had spoken,
You spoke when joy had passed.
Then the stormy sea shall flow in,
Our highland valleys through,
Ere I, my faithful Owen,
Prove false to love and you.

ROMANCE OF THE GOLDEN SPURS.

I.

"I AM weary, I am weary of the lagging hours alway,
The wound I got last autumn, it pains me sore to-day—
It is burning, it is throbbing worse than when 'twas wet
with gore,
And the joy of peace or battle I never shall see more."

II.

Thus spoke the brave Sir Thomas, the knight of
Imokeel :*
Beneath the Desmond's banner he had drawn his
conquering steel ;
But out beneath that banner he never more may ride,
With that shot-maimed arm of valour and that lance-
wound in his side.

* Imokeel, Imokilly, a barony in Cork between Cork city and Youghal. The FitzGerald's were chiefs—or "Seneschals"—of Imokilly.

III.

“My gallant boy, come hither : I give thee my brave
steed ;
My trusty blade I give thee to serve thee in thy need ;
Then don thy battle harness and with thy following ride
To join the noble Desmond by Imokilly’s side.”

IV.

Then out and spake the mother, a fond and fair ladye,
“If I should lose my Gerald what in life can comfort me ?
If I should lose my Gerald—if slain my boy should be,
One hour of peace or happiness I nevermore shall see !”

V.

But nathless her beseeching, and nathless sigh and tear,
Young Gerald’s gone to battle with many a gallant
spear ;
And in the early morning by Bride’s* translucent wave,
They mark the sunbeams glancing from hostile helm and
glaive.

VI.

“Come hither, come thou hither, thou stripling young
and gay,”—
’Twas thus upon the hill-side the Desmond bold did
say,—
“We’ll down upon yon army : God wot we’ll give them
play :
Go thou and take their castle and win thy spurs to-day !”

VII.

It was above the bridge-end that castle proud did stand ;
It was a gallant fortress as e’er was in the land ;
And downward dashed young Gerald at his valiant lord’s
command,
With his fearless ranks behind him and his long glaive in
his hand.

* Bride river flowing eastward through Cork and Waterford,
and joining the Blackwater between Youghal and Cappoquin.

VIII.

He has leaped the fosse so bravely amid shot and smoke
and wrack ;
He has mounted to the ramparts, his brave men at his
back ;—
They have taken that strong fortress at the good point of
the steel,
But where is he, their leader, the Boy of Imokeel ?

IX.

They search round fosse and rampart but cannot find him
there ;
They've searched the battered chambers and up the gory
stair ;
Till by the turret window 'mid a circle of the slain,
They have found the youthful Geraldine, his helmet cleft
in twain.

X.

It was a day of triumph to the Desmond by that shore,
And yet a day of sorrow, when young Gerald up they
bore—
Up they bore unto the hill-side where the noble Desmond
stood—
Their valiant young commander—face and armour stained
with blood.

XI.

Then out and spoke the Desmond : “ Now list ye all to
me ;
This boy has won the castle—this boy a knight shall be ;
But the hue of death is on him and he cannot speak or
kneel :
Here, page, my spurs : unbrace them and fix them on his
heel.”

XII.

I wis the sight was woeful, even in that blood-stained
place,
With the red gash on his forehead and the blood on his
pale face,
With the golden spurs braced on him glittering in the
sunlight clear,
Beneath the rustling banner, stretched upon his gory bier.

XIII.

Through Imokeel they bore him over many a plain and
dell,—
They bore him to his father and told him how he fell ;
The old man's wound burst open and the blood welled
from his side,
And he kissed his pale young champion, and down he
sank and died.

XIV.

“Now leave me,” said the mother, as wild she made her
moan,—
“Now leave me in this chamber to my great grief
alone.”
And she raised her voice in wailing till the twilight
gathered down
Upon the leafy forests, and the hills and moorlands brown.

XV.

It was the starry midnight ere the mother's tones sank
low,
And she prayed unto Our Lady with a broken voice and
slow:—
“O ! thou who once wert stricken worse than I, long
long ago,
Prop me up in this great trial, give me strength to bear
my woe.”

XVI.

What breaks the heavy stillness ? what in the chamber
stirs ?

Sure she hears the clank of armour and the clink of those
bright spurs !

And she looks upon her Gerald with a thrill of joy and
fear,

For he's rising, slowly rising, in his armour from the bier.

XVII.

O ! not slain, but sorely wounded !—Many a field of fire
and steel

Saw those sharp spurs' golden brightness dimmed with
gore upon each heel ;

For in aftertime for Erin never one so brave and leal
As Sir Gerald of the Forest, the Knight of Imokeel.

THE MOUNTAINS HIGH.*

I.

ON lowland plains I wander

All in the falling year,

By lowland valleys ponder

On home and home friends dear ;

But spring will soon restore me

Each long lost homely tie,

The grand cliffs tow'ring o'er me

Upon the mountains high.

II.

Within this lowland valley

There stands a castle strong,

Where round in each green alley

You'll hear the wild bird's song ;

* For the air :—Goodman's School and Home Song Book,
p. 49 : or Joyce's " Ancient Irish Music," p. 21.

But sweeter visions move me,
 To hear the eagle's cry,
 From beetling crags above me,
 Upon the mountains high.

III.

When autumn time is coming
 Along the hills and dells,
 You hear the wild bees humming
 Among the heather bells ;
 You hear the gay streams singing
 Their songs to earth and sky,
 Like bells of silver ringing
 Upon the mountains high.

 WILL OF GLENORE.*

AIR: 'Cad é sin don té sin.'†

In country or town there was never a man
 Who could handle a broadsword or fight in the van,
 Who could glory in danger whate'er was in store,
 Like the valiant young rapparee,‡ Will of Glenore.

From his boot to his basnet was burnished so sheen,
 And his arm it was strong and his sword it was keen ;
 And his brain was the brightest that ever of yore
 Laid a trap for the Sassenach—Will of Glenore.

* Glenore, Glanworth on the Funshion near Fermoy.

† For which see Joyce's *Old Irish Folk Music and Songs*.

‡ The Rapparees (and Tories) were young men—chiefs and farmers—who were turned out of their homes and lands to make room for settlers during the Plantations—16th and 17th centuries—and formed themselves into bands to be avenged on and to plunder those who had robbed them of their inheritance.

From Kilbenny* at cock-crow the Riddera Fionn
Spurred on with his vassals by forest and down,
Young Will to catch sleeping by dark Galtymore :
But the sleep of a fox slept young Will of Glenore.

For slyly and quietly he'd ambushed his men
Where the Funshion in foam tumbles down through the
glen :

"Now he thinks that he'll catch us just taking our snore ;
But 'tis he'll be caught napping !"—cried Will of Glenore.

The Riddera rode with his wild vassals in,
Till he'd reached the deep bosom of Funshion's lone
glynn.

"Now the Riddera's trapped and we'll pay an old score,
So blow up the trumpet !"—cried Will of Glenore.

Up they sprang at the signal and forward they dashed,
And down on the foe like a whirlwind they crashed :
And for many long years did the Riddera deplore
The drubbing he got from young Will of Glenore !

GRA GAL MACHREE

AIR : "Paddy's Green Island."†

I.

WHEN morning discloses its light on the roses,

Upon them reposes the sweet honey dew ;
Like those rosebuds the fairest, thy lips, O, my dearest,
Have honey the rarest to sweeten them too :

* Kilbenny or Kilbeheny, where lived the Riddera Fionn or "White Knight" (belonging to a branch of the FitzGerald), who took the side of the Government in the Geraldine Rebellion. The ruins of his castle still stand over the Funshion, near Mitchelstown.

† For which see Joyce's Old Irish Folk Music and Songs.

Thine eyes they are brighter than stars of the night, or
Than April skies' light, or than gems of the sea ;
Thy neck's like th' illuming bright lily assuming
Its first tender blooming, sweet Gra Gal Machree.

II.

I went to the greenwood, where streamlets serene would
Make music and sheen would enliven me more :
Sweet visions they wrought me, sweet memories they
brought me,
Of thee who first taught me love's passion and lore.
The birds round me winging, their carols were singing,
Their voices outringing with rapture and glee ;
My heart then enchanted, by memory haunted,
For thy loved words panted, sweet Gra Gal Machree.

III.

O Love, I am thinking of thee from the blinking
Of morn till the sinking of day in the west ;
And thus each fair creature, each bright blooming feature
And aspect of nature brings joy to my breast ;
At night through the airy sweet dreamland of fairy,
My soul still unweary is wandering to thee ;
And each dream or reflection is one recollection
Of thy fond affection, sweet Gra Gal Machree.

ALONG WITH MY LOVE I'LL GO.*

I.

My love has an eye of brightness,
An arm of valour free ;
My love has a heart of lightness,
But ever true to me ;

* For the air, see Joyce's "Ancient Irish Music," p. 63.
This title is the burden of an old folk song.

My pride still unchanging,
 His black locks' clust'ring flow,
 And away to the wild wars ranging,
 Along with my love I'll go.

III.

The woods wear winter's sadness,
 And white falls the icy shower ;
 There's shelter peace and gladness
 Within my father's tower.
 I bore the summer's burning ;
 I heed not winter's snow ;
 And thus through joy or mourning,
 Along with my love I'll go.

IV.

O, never once to leave him
 In tented field or hall ;
 To smile if joy receive him,
 Or die if he should fall.
 And ever thus unchanging,
 Through want, toil, and woe,
 Away to the wild wars ranging,
 Along with my love I'll go.

 DIARMID MÓR.

AIR : " The Lowlands of Holland."*

I.

THE wintry sun with cheerless gleam
 Gilds Limerick's battered towers,
 And far away down Shannon's stream
 A cloud of darkness lowers ;

* For which see Joyce's "Ancient Irish Music," p. 69. Diarmid was one of the Irish Brigade who went to France after the Treaty of Limerick in 1691.

And there they glide upon the tide,
The ships that bear him o'er
The stormy wave with Sarsfield brave,
My gallant Diarmid Mór.

II.

One summer eve, long long ago,
He said by wandering Lee,
Its rushing waves should backward flow
Ere he would part from me ;
But war came down with sullen frown,
And—called from Shannon's shore—
He left his bride that eventide—
My gallant Diarmid Mór.

III.

He heard its call and sped away
To aid his native land :
Can Aughrim's field or Limerick say
They saw a truer hand ?
Heart, arm, and glaive he freely gave,
As did his sires before ;
And now he flees across the seas,
My gallant Diarmid Mór.

IV.

By Lee's green banks the flowers shall bloom,
When summer decks the grove ;
But when unto my heart shall come
The smiles of my true love ?
O, oft and drear shall flow the tear,
Till some glad bark has bore
My love again back o'er the main,
My gallant Diarmid Mór.

FINNEEN O'DRISCOLL THE ROVER.*

AIR—"The Groves of Blackpool."†

I.

AN old castle towers o'er the billows
That thunder by Cleena's green land,
And there dwelt as gallant a rover
As ever grasped hilt in the hand ;
Eight stately towers of the waters
Lie anchored in Baltimore Bay ;
And over their twenty score sailors
Bold Finneen the Rover holds sway.
Then O, for Finneen the Rover,
Finneen O'Driscoll the free,
As straight as the mast of his galley,
And strong as a wave of the sea !

II.

The Saxons of Cork and Moyallo,‡
They harried his coasts with their bands
He gave them a taste of his cannon
And drove them like wolves from his lands ;
The men of Clan London brought over
Their strong fleet to make him a slave ;

* The O'Driscolls owned Baltimore on the south Cork coast, with the adjacent territory and islands, where the ruins of several of their castles are still to be seen: they were noted sailors and sea-rovers. The hero of this ballad was Sir Finneen O'Driscoll, who flourished in the sixteenth century; and the ruins of his castle of Duninalong—the "old castle" of the first line of the ballad—still stand on the shore of Sherkin Island, near Cape Clear. His exploits as a bold sea champion are well remembered in history. For Cleena, see pp. 28, 32.

† For which see Joyce's Old Irish Folk Music and Songs.

‡ Moyallo, Mallow.

He met them on Mizen's rough breakers,
 And the sharks crunched their bones 'neath
 the wave !
 Then O, for Finneen the Rover,
 Finneen O'Driscoll the free,
 With step like the red stag of Beara,*
 And voice like the bold sounding sea !

III.

Long time in that strong island castle,
 Or out on the waves with his clan,
 He feasted and ventured and conquered,
 But ne'er struck his colours to man.
 In a fight 'gainst the foes of his country
 He died as a brave man should die ;
 And he sleeps 'neath the waters of Cleena,
 Where the waves sing his *keen*† to the sky.
 Then O ! for Finneen the Rover,
 Finneen O'Driscoll the free,
 With eye like the osprey's at morning,
 And smile like the sun on the sea !

THE RAPPAREE'S HORSE AND SWORD.‡

AIR—Cad é sin don té sin.§

I.

My name is Mac Sheehy from Feale's|| swelling flood,
 A rapparee rover by mountain and wood :
 I have two trusty comrades to serve me at need,—
 This sword at my side and my gallant grey steed.

* Beara, the barony of Beare in West Cork.

† Keen, Irish *caoin*, *caoineadh*, a dirge, a lament.

‡ This little piece vividly pictures the spirit of those times (about 1690). For the rapparees, see p. 144.

§ For which see Joyce's *Old Irish Folk Music and Songs*.

|| Feale river flowing by Abbeyfeale and Listowel in Limerick and Kerry.

II.

Now where did I get them,—my gallant grey steed,
And my sword keen and trusty to serve me at need ?
This sword was my father's—in battle he died—
And I reared my bold Isgur by Feale's woody side.

III.

I've said it, and say it, and care not who hear,
Myself and grey Isgur have never known fear :
There's a dint on my helmet, a hole through his ear :
'Twas the same bullet made them at Limerick last year !

IV.

And the soldier who fired it was still ramming down,
When this long sword came right with a slash on his
crown ;
Dhar Dhee ! He will never fire musket agen,
For his skull lies in two at the side of the glen !

V.

When they caught us one day at the castle of Brugh,*
Our black-hearted foemen, a merciless crew :
Like a bolt from the thunder-cloud Isgur went through,
And my sword,—ah, it gave them what long they will
rue !

VI.

Together we sleep under rough crag or tree,—
My soul, there were never such comrades as we !
I, Brian the Rover, and my two friends at need—
This sword at my side and my gallant grey steed.

* Brugh [pron. Broo], Bruff in Co. Limerick.

SUNNY GLENEIGH.*

AIR—"Do you remember that night!"†

I.

I STILL am a rover our green island over,
 A passion-fraught lover of beauty and bloom;
 On wild mountains pondering, through sweet valleys
 wandering,
 Where soft winds are squandering the blossoms'
 perfume.
 From all these dear places, with their bland summer
 graces,—
 From all their fair faces my heart still doth stray,
 To where clear waves are flinging and flowerets are
 springing,
 And blithe birds are singing in sunny Gleneigh.

II.

There green woods wave slowly to winds breathing lowly,
 And ruin walls holy‡ stand grey o'er the scene;
 There clear fountains rally their strength in each valley,
 Where waves the wild sally and birch leaves are green.
 There rocks famed in story stand silent and hoary,
 And fields in the glory of summer are gay,
 And mead blossoms muster their bells of bright lustre,
 And rich berries cluster in sunny Gleneigh.

* Gleneigh or Glenea, a pretty little glen on the west side of Ardpatrik hill midway between Ardpatrik and Mount Russell.

† For which see Joyce's "Ancient Irish Music," p. 23; or Goodman's "School and Home Song Book," p. 50.

‡ Ruin walls holy: Ardpatrik old church on the top of the hill: see pp. 6, 102.

O'SULLIVAN'S RETREAT.*

A.D. 1602-3.

AIR: "Ca rabbais a anois chailín bhig,"†

I.

GLENGARRIFF's shore could give no more
 The shelter strong we needed ;
 So away we trode on our wintry road,
 Its dangers all unheeded.
 The snows were deep, the paths were steep,
 But worse than these soon found us—
 The ruffian swords and the traitor hordes
 That flocked like wolves around us.
 We'll shout hurrah for valour's sway,
 Each trembling coward scorning,
 For cleaving brands in dauntless hands,
 And all for Freedom's morning !

II.

Mac Caurha's powers by Duhallow's towers
 Our charge they turned their backs on ;
 And Mallow's flood we stained with blood
 Of Barry, Rupè, Saxon.
 By Galty's hill around us still
 Rushed many a fierce marauder,
 Yet our path we clave to Shannon's wave,
 And all by the good *lámh láidir*.‡
 We'll shout hurrah ! &c.

* An account of this celebrated retreat, which is correctly described in the ballad, will be found in A. M. Sullivan's Story of Ireland, or in Joyce's Histories of Ireland. See the Ballad, p. 119.

† For which see Goodman's School and Home Song Book, p. 55.

‡ Pron. *lauv lauder* · the strong hand.

III.

Mac Egan's wrath there barred our path,
 But we gave him warning early
 To clear the way or his hands we'd slay,
 And we kept our promise fairly.
 Each killed his steed in that hour of need,
 After false Mac Egan's slaughter,
 Curraghs* unstaïd of their skins we made,
 And crossed the Shannon's water.
 Then shout hurrah ! &c.

IV.

O'Sullivan marched on our van,
 When the foe at Aughrim found us ;
 Black Malbie's head on the sword he laid,
 While we fought all around us.
 But O, how few of our brave and true
 Reached Brefney's† mountains hoary !
 Yet none should weep for the brave who sleep
 On that path so rough and gory.
 Then shout hurrah for valour's sway,
 Each trembling coward scorning,
 For cleaving brands in dauntless hands,
 And all for Freedom's morning !

* Curragh, a light wicker boat. In these frail improvised vessels they successfully crossed the Shannon near Portland in North Tipperary, just at the moment that their enemies were closing round them.

† Brefney, a territory in Co. Leitrim belonging to the O'Ruarks. Of 1000—men, women, and children—who had set out from Glengarriff a fortnight before, less than 100 reached their destination, O'Ruark's Castle of Leitrim, three miles north of Carrick-on-Shannon : all the rest had dropped behind, wearied out or sick, or had fallen in the numerous skirmishes on the way.

THE GREEN DOVE AND THE RAVEN.

I.

THERE was a dove with wings of green,
Glistening o'er so radiantly,
With head of blue and golden sheen,
All sad and wearily,
Sitting two green boughs between
On lovely Barna's wild-wood tree.

II.

There was a letter 'neath its wing,
Written by a fair ladye,
Safely bound with silken string
So light and daintily,
And in that letter was a ring,
On lovely Barna's wild-wood tree,

III.

There was a raven black and drear,
Stained with blood all loathsomely,
Perched upon the branches near,
Croaking mournfully ;
And he said, " O dove, what bring'st thou here
To lovely Barna's wild-wood tree ? "

IV.

" I'm coming from a ladye gay,
To the young heir of sweet Glenore,*
His ring returned, it is to say
" She'll never love him more,—
Alas the hour, alas the day,—
By murmuring Funshion's fairy shore.

* Glenore: Glanworth on the river Funshion. See p. 108.

V.

“ O dove, outspread thy wings of green ;
 I'll guide thee many a wild-wood o'er ;
 I'll bring thee where I last have seen
 The young heir of Glenore,
 Beneath the forest's sunless screen,
 By murmuring Funshion's fairy shore.”

VI.

O'er many a long mile did they flee,
 The dove, the raven stained with gore,
 And found beneath the Murderer's Tree
 The young heir of Glenore,—
 A bloody, ghastly corpse was he,
 By murmuring Funshion's fairy shore.

VII.

“ Go back, go back, thou weary dove,—
 And tell the cruel maid o'er and o'er,
 He's Death's and mine ; her hate or love
 Can never reach him more—
 To his ice-cold heart in Molaga's* grove,
 By murmuring Funshion's fairy shore.”

 THE MERRY CHRISTMAS FIRE.

AIR : “ The first night I was married.”†

I.

By turns I'm gloomy, gay, or sad,
 As seasons pass away ;
 But always cheerful, always glad
 When cometh Christmas Day ;

* Molaga old church near Kildorrery Co. Cork. See p. 108.

† For which see Joyce's “ Ancient Irish Music,” p. 69.

And never bliss more sweet than this
Can happy man desire,
Than sit a-near his true friends dear
By the merry Christmas fire.

II.

In summer time the vales are bright
With glancing leaf and flower,
And autumn spreads its amber light
On many a lovely bower ;
And sweetly sing the birds in spring,
Like tune of fairy lyre ;
But far more dear, my true friends near
And the merry Christmas fire.

III.

From the Christmas fire the gay flames dart,
And glance and whirl and glow ;
And joyous bounds my happy heart,
While the world is white with snow.
O, gladdest boon, to sit full soon
Where the young heart ne'er could tire,
All fondly near my true friends dear,
By the merry Christmas fire.

ROMANCE OF THE GOLDEN HELMET.*

I.

ONE glorious Easter even,
Under the mountain tree,
A young knight sat bereaven,
A-gazing up and down.
And wearily and drearily
Along the plains looked he,
And up the summits brown.

* This ballad embodies a legend of the Cummeragh Mountains in Waterford.

II.

The birds were singing sweetly
From the wild quicken grove,
The dun deer gambolled fleetly
Beside the upland rills ;
While wearily and drearily
He thought upon his love—
Young Bride of the castled hills.

III.

His wolf-hound, by him lying,
Looked up into his face,
As though he read the flying
Thoughts of his master's brain.
How wearily and drearily
Through the brain's little space,
Speeds thought's black train !

IV.

“ Around my love's hoar dwelling ”—
’Twas thus Sir Brian said—
“ The Norman host is swelling,
And I a banished man.
O, wearily and drearily
My mournful days have sped
Under my foemen's ban.”

V.

Just then a white fawn darted
Out from the quicken screen,
And up the wolf-hound started,
And after her away ;
And suddenly, all suddenly,
Under the copses green
Soon vanished they.

VI.

Beside a cave's hoar portal
The wolf-hound lost his chase.
Could that white fawn be mortal,
His keen eyes thus to blind ?
Yet eagerly, full eagerly,
He still pursued the trace
Through the cave like the wind.

VII.

Now came the sunset gleaming
O'er haunted crag and dell ;
The young knight stays his dreaming,
And looks once more around,
Till eagerly, full eagerly,
Across the silent fell,
Cometh his brave wolf-hound :—

VIII.

In his mouth a helmet golden
He'd found in th' ancient cave,
With a scroll decayed and olden
Fastened beside the crest :—
*" Who'll bear me, who'll wear me,
Shall have an army brave
To do at his behest."*

IX.

Sir Brian placed the helmet
His plumed cap instead,
And scarce had cried, " Now, well met,
My 'fenceless head and thou !"
When suddenly, all suddenly,
He heard an army's tread
Over the mountain's brow !

X.

And quickly filed before him
A thousand mounted men :
High in the twilight o'er him
Their gilded banners sail,
And gallantly, right gallantly,
They rode in that wild glen,
All in their glittering mail.

XI.

One led unto Sir Brian
A mighty milk-white steed,
And he has mounted high on
The antique saddle-tree ;
And eagerly, right eagerly,
All cried :—" In thy great need,
We now will follow thee ! "

XII.

Away Sir Brian dashes
With those weird warriors all ;
The craggy roadway flashes
Beneath their horse-hoofs' bound,
Till rushingly, still rushingly,
They speed nigh his true-love's wall,
By the Normans leaguered round.

XIII.

Behind Sir Brian kept they,
Their proud plumes dancing high ;
With brave Sir Brian swept they
Upon the Norman crew ;
And fearfully, O, fearfully
Rose their ancient battle-cry,
Till all they took or slew !

XIV.

His love came forth to meet him
Beneath the midnight stars,
His many friends to greet him
And those weird warriors all :
And joyfully, full joyfully,
All crossed the fortress bars,
And feasted in the hall.

XV.

Till morn's white planet lit them,
Those champions could not wait ;
The milk-white charger with them
Towards the lone hills they bore ;
And gallantly, right gallantly,
They rode from the castle gate,
And ne'er were looked on more !

XVI.

Long in that ancient castle,
Beneath grey Cummeragh's head,
Bright over feast and wassail
That golden helmet shone ;
And joyfully, O joyfully,
These lovers twain were wed
Ere the next morn was gone.*

* The peasantry of the Cummeraghs will tell you that they often hear—and sometimes see—a troop of ancient spellbound warriors galloping at night along the wild mountain tracks. But this legend is met with elsewhere in Ireland. See p. 16 for Garrod Iarla and his men.

MARGARET.

I.

THE hills and the dells and the flower-edged streams
 Are brighter than they were wont to be ;
 For winter is gone, and the sunny gleams
 Of spring-time clothe them in radiancy :
 But my Margaret is gone, and the spring's bright beams
 Are darkened and dead to me.

II.

Valley and plain look serene and bright,
 Crag and castle, green fields and all ;
 The young lambs play in their fresh delight,
 And the sweet birds sing in the forest tall :
 But my Margaret is gone, and the shades of night
 Dark down in my bosom fall.

III.

The winter has fled from mountain and stream,
 The woods and the hedges are green all o'er ;
 But where are those eyes of the azure beam,
 And those radiant locks like the golden ore ?
 Ah, my Margaret is gone, and my youthful dream
 Has vanished for evermore.

 I WISH I SAT BY GRENA'S SIDE.

AIR : " I wish I had the yellow Cow."*

I.

I WISH I sat by Grena's† side,
 With the friends of boyhood-tide,
 With the maids the brilliant-eyed,
 Playful wild and airy,

* For which see Joyce's *Irish Music and Song*, p. 12.

† Grena, the little stream flowing through Lyre-na-Grena, south-east side of Seefin Mountain. See p. 103.

Who taught me that love could go
 From maid to maiden to and fro,
 But turning with fonder glow
 Back to you,¹ my Mary.

II.

I wish I sat by Grena's stream,
 In the ruddy sunset beam,
 Where the wavelets leap and gleam
 On through dell and wildwood ;
 Ne'er half so fleet and free
 As the fairy feet of glee
 That danced 'neath the summer tree
 In our dreamy childhood.

III.

I wish I sat by Grena's wave,
 Hopes fulfilled that boyhood gave,
 Where the woods clothe gorge and cave,
 Storied hill and plain, love ;
 You placed beside me there,
 Laughing, loving, kind and fair,
 Long parted far, but ne'er,
 Ne'er to part again, love !

ROVING BRIAN O'CONNELL.

AIR—"How do you like her for your wife?"*

I.

"How do you like her for your wife,
 Roving Brian O'Connell—
 A loving mate and true for life,
 Roving Brian O'Connell?"

* For which see Joyce's "Ancient Irish Music," p. 37. This name is the opening line of an old folk song.

“She’s as fit to be my wife
As my sword is for the strife,”
Said the Rapparee* trooper,
Roving Brian O’Connell.

II.

“Never man my child will take,
Roving Brian O’Connell,
Save him who’d die for Ireland’s sake,
Roving Brian O’Connell.”
“O, I’d die for Ireland’s sake,
And her bonds we soon will break”;
Said the Rapparee trooper,
Roving Brian O’Connell.

III.

“How will you your young bride keep,
Roving Brian O’Connell?
The foemen’s bands are ne’er asleep,
Roving Brian O’Connell.”
“In our hold by Connail’s steep,
Who dare make my Mabel weep!”
Said the Rapparee trooper,
Roving Brian O’Connell.

IV.

“This day in ruined church you stand,
Roving Brian O’Connell,
To take your loving Mabel’s hand,
Roving Brian O’Connell.”
“O, my heart my arm and brand
Are for her and our dear land”;
Said the Rapparee trooper,
Roving Brian O’Connell.

* Rapparee: see p. 144.

THE WANDERER.

AIR—"Slán Beo."*

O, GREEN are the woods that circle my Helen's wild
home,
And sweetest her smiles from Houra to Cleena's† bright
foam,
And brightest her eyes 'mong the blue eyes of splendour
that beam
Mid the hills of the South, by wildwood and fountain
and stream.

II.

By Shannon's green shore my wandering footsteps I
stayed
On a wave-beaten steep to dream of my yellow-haired
maid:
When I saw the fleet wing of the white gull gleaming
below,
I thought of her archèd brow and her fair neck of snow.

III.

And once by the marge of Cleena's bright waters I lay,
In a sweet dream of love and joy at the opening of day;
The beams of the morn smiled over the blue billows
there,
Like the smiles of my love, like the wreaths of her long
golden hair.

IV.

And thus as I stray by river and wildwood and sea,
All Nature still paints but one lovely image for me;
And I wish for the day when I'll stand by Ounanaar's tide‡
In the greenwood again, with my bright-eyed love for
my bride.

* For which see Joyce's "Ancient Irish Music," p. 4.

† Houra, the Ballyhoura Mountains. "Cleena's bright foam,"
the sea off the coast of South Cork: see p. 28.

‡ Ounanaar, the Glenanaar river: see p. 19.

THE BATTLE OF MANNING FORD.*

This battle was fought in the summer of 1643 by the troops of the Kilkenny Confederation (i.e., the Irish army), under Lord Castlehaven, against one of the armies of Murrough O'Brien, earl of Inchiquin,† commanded by Sir Charles Vavasour. Early in June, Vavasour took the castle of Cloghleagh on the north bank of the river Funshion near Kilworth, Co. Cork (of which the ruins still remain), after a brave defence by Condon, the owner; and all that were found in the castle, viz., 20 men, 11 women, and 7 children, were stripped and massacred. On next day, 4th June, Vavasour, seeing Castlehaven's army approaching him from the north, hastily retreated southward across the Funshion at the Ford of Manning, intending to reach Fermoy. But he had barely time to cross the ford when Castlehaven was down on him and fell on his rear, composed of a "forlorn hope," and a party of horse. The horse fled and galloped in among the main body of retreating foot as they were making their way towards Fermoy through a narrow passage or laneway. Utter confusion and defeat followed, Vavasour himself was taken prisoner, 600 of his men fell, and all his principal officers were either slain or captured. His standards fell into the hands of the Irish, together with his baggage, his artillery, and a great supply of small arms.‡

I.

I SHARPENED my sword in the morning and buckled my
basnet and jack ;
I clothed my steed in his harness and cheerily sprang on
his back ;

* The Ford of Manning on the river Funshion is a mile and a half below Glanworth near Fermoy, and half a mile above the present Ballynahow Bridge.

† Murrough O'Brien, earl of Inchiquin, called "Murrough the Burner" from his merciless ravages in Munster, fought against his country in the War of the Confederation.

‡ See Borlase, *History of the Rebellion*, p. 115; and Castlehaven's *Memoirs*: 1643.

I rode with my good men behind me and never drew rein
by the way,
Till we came to the green Pass of Ballagh and called up
young Johnnie Dunlea.

II.

With him and his following we clattered adown by the
hoarse-sounding rill,
Till we came to the strong House of Sloragh and blew up
our bugle full shrill ;
Then Diarmid the Master of Sloragh rode gallantly out
with his men,
And we shouted " Hurrah for the battle ! " as onward
we thundered again.

III.

We swept like the wind through the valley — deep
quagmire and trench we defied,
And we knocked at the strong gate of Dangan where
Will of the Wood kept his bride ;—
How he pressed her sweet lips at the parting and kissed
off her tears o'er and o'er :
But alas, they flowed faster at even, for her bridegroom
came back nevermore !

IV.

Through the bog of Glendoran we waded and on through
the green forest crashed,
Then along o'er the broad-spreading highland, a torrent
of bright steel, we dashed ;
And there how we shouted for gladness as the glitter of
spears we descried
From the army of bold Castlehaven far off on the green
mountain side.

V.

I rode up to Lord Castlehaven and asked for a place in
his rank ;
And he said, " Keep ye shoulder to shoulder, and charge
ye to-day from our flank."

And we marched 'neath his banner that noontide till fast
by Lis-Funshion we lay,
Where we drank a good *sláinte** to Ireland and looked to
our arms for the fray.

VI.

Next morn, as we gazed down the moorland, a horseman
we saw spurring in,
And he stinted his course not for thicket, for deep bog
or crag-strewn ravine,
Till his charger fell dead by our standard, that waved in
the bright morning glow ;
Then up to our chieftain he tottered and told him his
dark tale of woe.

VII.

“ Brave Baron of broad Castlehaven, last eve in the
Tower of Cloghleagh
The foe battered down our defences : save me, every man
did they slay ;
They brought forth their prisoners this morning, with
maiden and matron and child,
And the bloodthirsty miscreants led them away through
the brown forest wild.

VIII.

“ And there, in the dell of Glenullin they murdered those
poor prisoners all,
And the demons they laughed as they slew them—ah !
quickly they freed them from thrall :
And now look ye sharp to the southward ; see Vavasour
there with his horde ;
Then give him the murderer's guerdon and pay him with
bullet and sword ! ”

* *Sláinte* [pron. Slawntha], health.

IX.

We looked to the southward and saw them with many a
creacht* moving on,
With the spoil of two counties behind them, by murder
and cruelty won ;
With a waving and flaunting of banners, and bright-
flashing arms did they go,
With the clear shrilly clamour of trumpets and the loud
rolling drum of our foe.

X.

Then out spurred our brave Castlehaven, his sword
flashing bright in his hand,
And he cried, " Now my children we've caught them, the
foes of your dear native land.
Brave horsemen bear down on the rearguard—brave foot-
men strike hard on their flanks,
And we'll give them a bed near the Funshion—a grave
cold and red by its banks !"

XI.

Then came the loud clangour of horse and the rattling of
lances and swords,
And the gloom and the glitter of battle as we eagerly
rushed towards their hordes :
We dashed through the ford, horse and foot—on their
rear like a whirlwind we tore,
Till their horse galloped down on their footmen, and we
at their backs striking sore.

XII.

Yet Vavasour kept by his standard, for a space he stood
up 'gainst our charge,
But we took him and all his bold leaders, on the slope of
that clear river's marge ;

* Creacht, a cattle spoil

One flag-bearer fled to Kilmallock with banner all
shattered and torn—
Sad news to Black Murrogh the Burner, the sight of
that horseman forlorn!

XIII.

And over the broad Ford of Manning we kindled our
camp-fires so bright,
And fast by the shore of the Funshion how wildly we
revelled that night!
And we drank a good bumper to Ireland, and one to our
general brave,
Who led us to triumph and glory that day by the bright
Funshion's wave.

YOUNG DE RUPÈ.*

I.

A STRICKEN plain is good to see
When victory crowns the patriot's sword,
And the gory field seemed fair to me
Won in the fight at Manning Ford.

II.

As I stooped down my thirst to slake,
A voice came ringing in mine ears:—
“Now who this joyful news will take
Of victory to my goodly peers?”

III.

I turned me instant right about
Down by the Funshion's rippling tide,
And there I saw our leader stout,
Bold Castlehaven, at my side.

*De Rupè, the original form of the present family name Roche. This ballad is a sequel to the preceding one.

IV.

“Now who this joyful news will take
To far Kilkenny’s ancient town,*
And win a good knight’s spurs, and make
His name a name of high renown?”

V.

With that up spoke a stripling brave
Where by a captured flag he stood,
Wounded and grimed with dust—his glaive
Still dripping with the foemen’s blood.

VI.

His form was like Bengara’s† pine,
His youthful face was fair to see,
And his eyes were like the osprey’s eyne
On the barren crags of Barnalee.

VII.

“The foe may lurk in bush and brake,
The wolves may howl, the night come down,
But De Rupè of Ballar news will take
To far Kilkenny’s famous town.”

VIII.

Pleasantly smiled that warlike lord,
His hand he slapped on his mailed knee,—
“Shouldst thou return, by my knightly word,
Through many a fight thou’lt ride with me.

IX.

“But speed thee now as the wild wind speeds,
And take that captured flag thou’st won;
’Twill mind them of thy valiant deeds,
And tell them best what we have done.”

* Kilkenny, the headquarters of the Kilkenny Confederation, about sixty-five English miles across country from Manning Ford. Part of the intervening district was held by Inchiquin’s forces, and of course was very dangerous for Castlehaven’s courier to traverse.

† Bengara, in the Galtys: see p. 37.

X.

He took that rent and gory flag,
Then vaulted to his saddle-tree,
On his trusty steed, and by height and crag,
Like the lightning bolt away went he.

XI.

He had ridden scarce three leagues or so,
When the night came down all cloudy and black,
And he passed the forest of Rossaroe,
While its fierce wolves howled upon his track.

XII.

They scented the fresh blood on the wind,
And they whisked their tails in savage glee ;
But though they whined and howled behind,
He left them all right speedilie.

XIII.

O'er many a pass and moorland wide
On his weary way he toiled full sore,
Till he reached the ford of the broad Suir's tide
And splashed across to the farther shore.

XIV.

"Now who art thou?" did a horseman say—
"What news—what news from the Irish foes?
For never a man shall go this way
Unless Lord Murrogh's pass he shews."

XV.

"I am De Rupè of Ballar dell ;
Sore is the news I bring to thee " ;—
And he dashed right up at that sentinel,
And felled him to earth with the banner-tree !

XVI.

He sprang unto the foeman's selle,
For his own good steed dropped helpless down .
And away once more o'er plain and fell,
On his path is young De Rupè bowne.

XVII.

Before the peers for Ireland's good,
In far Kilkenny's town next day,
Prelate and priest in brotherhood
Were chanting Mass in the Black Abbaye.*

XVIII.

They heard a murmur in the street,
And anon a cheer that shook the town ;
Then the clatter of a charger's feet
On the stony way came ringing down.

XIX.

And high again that cheering roar
Through the bannered aisles like thunder ran,
Till the ancient abbey's sculptured door
Was darkened by a horse and man.

XX.

He muttered one prayer his soul to save,—
That courier brave, that wounded wight,—
Then clattered up the echoing nave,
And stopped before the altar bright.

XXI.

“ Christ shrive thy soul, thou gory youth ! ”
Up spake the Primate old and grey—
“ Tidings of joy or tale of ruth
Bring'st thou to tell us here to-day ? ”

XXII.

“ I bring ye news from Manning Ford ;
We've smote the foeman gallantlie ;
This flag bold Castlehaven's lord
A token good hath sent by me ! ”

* The very ancient Dominican priory called the “ Black Abbey,” in Irishtown, Kilkenny, is still in use as a Roman Catholic church.

XXIII.

Fast at the words from his wounded side
 The life-blood spirted o'er hip and selle ;
 As a tree in its pride 'neath the wild winds' tide,
 With a crash on the stony floor he fell !

XXIV.

They laid his corse by the altar bright,
 They chanted the Mass for the brave youth's weal,
 And they prayed to God, in His mercy and might,
 For hearts like that dead heart bold and leal.

XXV.

Christ save his soul, that gallant youth,—
 When by the Judgment Seat we stand,—
 Who rode that ride of death and ruth,
 And all for love of native land !

THE FIRST NIGHT I WAS MARRIED.*

AIR: "The Lowlands of Holland."†

I.

THE first night I was married and made a happy bride,
 The captain of the cavalry he came to my lover's side,
 "Arise arise, new married man, arise and come with me,
 To the lowlands of Holland to face your enemy.

II.

"Holland is a pretty place, the fairest I have seen,
 With the waysides glittering all in flowers and the fields
 so bright and green ;

* From the fragments of an old ballad, about the time of the "Wild Geese," or recruits for the Continental Irish Brigade. The first and last verses are taken almost unchanged. For the Irish Brigade and the "Wild Geese," see any History of Ireland, at 1691 and after.

† For which see Joyce's "Ancient Irish Music," p. 69.

The sunshine lights the clustering grapes, the vines hang
from the tree";
And I scarce had time to look about when my true love
was gone from me.

III.

I built my love a gallant ship to bear him o'er the main,
With four-and-twenty sailors bold all for a fitting train;
The storm came down upon the sea and the waves began
to roar,
And dashed my love and his gallant ship upon the
Holland shore.

IV.

Says the mother to the daughter, "What makes you so
lament?
Is there ne'er a man in Ireland to please your discontent?
There are men enough in Ireland but none at all for
me,
For I never loved but one young man and he's beyond
the sea."

ADIEU, LOVELY MARY.

AIR: "Adieu, lovely Mary."*

I.

ADIEU, lovely Mary; I am now going to leave you,
And to the West Indies my sad course to steer;
I know very well my long absence will grieve you,
But sweetheart, I'll be back in the spring of the year."†

* For which see Joyce's "Ancient Irish Music," p. 95.

† This is a verse unchanged of the old Folk-song on which
the present song is founded.

II.

The May-fires* were burning and ships were returning,
But word never came to allay her sad fear,
And sorely and sadly young Mary sat mourning
The loss of her love in the spring of the year.

III.

And summer thus found her, and wooers came round her,
Yet deep in her bosom one form she held dear ;
She answered them, weeping, " My love I am keeping
For one who'll be back in the spring of the year."

IV.

The old man with treasure, the young man with pleasure,
Still courted till autumn was yellow and sear ;
But her vows were unbroken, for the same words were
spoken,
" My love will be back in the spring of the year."

V.

Next spring flowers were shining, and Mary sat twining
A wreath of their blooms, and her heart was not
drear ;
For with love warmly glowing, when soft winds were
blowing,
Her true love came back in the spring of the year.

* May fires : *i.e.* Baal fires, for which see p. 192.

THE BRIGADE'S HURLING MATCH.*

AIR: "The Game played in Erin go Bragh."†

I.

IN the South's blooming valleys they sing and they play
 By their vine-shaded cots at at the close of the day :
 But a game like our own the Italians ne'er saw—
 The wild sweeping hurlings of Erin go Bragh.

II.

Our tents they were pitched upon Lombardy's plain ;
 Ten days nigh the foemen our army had lain ;
 But ne'er through their walls made we passage or flaw,
 Till we showed them the game played in Erin go Bragh.

III.

Our sabres were sharp and the forest was nigh ;
 There our hurleys we fashioned ere morning rose high ;
 With the goal-ball young Mahon had brought from
 Dunlawe,
 We showed them the game played in Erin go Bragh.

* Hurling. This is the game of *Camán*, well known and still played in Ireland: very ancient. Played with *camáns* or hurleys (formidable weapons in a fight) and a ball. For this game, see Joyce's *Social History of Ancient Ireland*, and Very Rev. Dr. Sheehan's "*Glenanaar*," pp. 7, 231, 232. The story embodied in this ballad was told among the people of Cork and Limerick sixty years ago—how a company of the Irish Brigade in the service of France captured a town in the manner related. Whether the incident ever happened or not, it is an excellent typical example of the sort of dare-devil dash that has always been characteristic of the Irish in battle.

† For which see Joyce's "*Ancient Irish Music*," p. 86.

IV.

Our captain stood out with the ball in his hand ;
Our colonel he gave us the word of command ;
Then we dashed it and chased it o'er esker and scragh,*
While we showed them the game played in Erin go Bragh.

V.

The enemy stood on their walls high and strong,
While we raced it and chased it and hurled it along ;
And they opened their gate as we nearer did draw,
To see the old game played in Erin go Bragh.

VI.

On a sudden we turned from the ball's swift career ;
And rushed through the gate with a grand ringing cheer ;
Ah, they ne'er through our bright dauntless stratagem
saw,
While we showed them the game played in Erin go
Bragh.

VII.

Their swords clashed around us, their balls raked us sore,
But with hurleys we paid them in hard knocks galore ;
For their bullets and sabres we cared not a straw,
While we showed them the game played in Erin go
Bragh.

VIII.

The fortress is taken ! our loud shouts arise ;
For King Louis and Ireland they swell to the skies.
Ah, he laughed as he told us a game he ne'er saw
Like the wild sweeping hurlings of Erin go Bragh !

* Esker, a low little sand-hill: Scragh [scraw], a grassy surface.

THE BALLAD OF SIR HUGH LE POER;* OR
THE DEATH FEUD.

I.

THERE is a height by Cloda's† shore
With a grey crag upon its crown,
And from that crag a castle hoar
Looks over many a dale and down ;
And in that castle is a room
Where I spent many an hour of gloom ;
For from my birth some malady
Of power malign had seized on me,
So that I was a weakly child,
Cursed with a soul perverse and wild,
A mischievous and peevish child.

II.

I had four brothers, tall and brave,
Deft at the bridle and the glaive ;
I had four sisters, fair to see ;
A mother fond as fond could be ;
My father was a comely man
As e'er drew sword in battle's van.

* This was Sir Hugh le Poer, one of the Four Comrades (p. 27), and the ballad is one of the tales told beside the Watch-fire in the Wood of Barnalee. The ballad recounts Sir Hugh's personal history.

† Cloda, the river Clodiagh in Waterford, rising in the Cumberagh Mountains, flowing eastward by Clonea, and joining the Suir near Portlaw. The castle of Le Poer (now Power) was on the shore of the Clodiagh.

III.

Oft, when alone within my room,
Strange shapes arose in evening's gloom.
Wild shadowy forms would then arise
And pierce me with their searching eyes—
Vast shades of saffron-kilted chiefs
With beards like foam on Burren's reefs ;*
Huge Danes with looks of fire and bale
Dim glimmering in their shirts of mail ;
Stern Norman knights with hearts as hard
As the blue flints of Bleannamard,
Came in their iron panoply,
Each in his turn, and gazed on me ;
With many another phantom train—
The spawn of my distempered brain.

IV.

At morning too the playful elves,
Who in the lone raths hide themselves,†
Came from each glen and forest glade,
And many a gambol round me played ;
And when my wild weird laughter smote
The warders' ears beside the moat,
They crossed themselves, all shuddering,
And said I was no earthly thing,
But an unnatural changeling sprite
Left by the Deena Shee at night.‡

* Burren, a rocky district verging on the ocean, in the north of Clare.

† Fairies dwell in raths : see note, p. 26.

‡ Deena Shee, the fairies. Sometimes the fairies take away a beautiful child and leave an elf in its place, who is always impish and troublesome.

V.

Amongst that merry crowd was one,
An imp of mischief and of fun,
From the green rath by Cloda's hill,
Who said his name was Snaudadil.*
I'd but to call, and presently
Up at my elbow started he,
To prompt me to such antics wild
As ne'er were played by mortal child :
Alas, one prank he made me play
I'll rue until my dying day.

VI.

One morn, my father, freres, and all,
At matin meal sat in the hall ;
The steeds outside all saddled stood
To hunt the stag in Brona's wood ;
When at my elbow Snaud appeared
With many an antic strange and weird ;
He led me down the stair with speed,
And bade me mount my father's steed.
A moment—and I sat in selle ;
A moment—with a vicious yell
Of elfish and exulting glee,
I shook the bossy bridle free
And pricked the great steed with a knife
I'd stolen from Gil the falconer's wife.
Madly he danced the court-yard round,
Then crossed the deep moat at a bound,
And, with a short and angry neigh
Of rage and terror, dashed away
Like lightning down the forest track,
As if a fiend was on his back !

* Snaudadil, Irish *snáthad-a'-diabhail*, the "devil's needle," which is the name of the dragonfly among the people.

VII.

At first I was of sense bereft,
The breath my little body left,
So fast and furious was the speed,
The pace of that strong sable steed.
At last I woke, full soon to find
My father and my freres behind,
Scouring along, with six good men,
To stop my course through Brone's Glen—
That fatal gorge of crags and pits,
Where Brone the Banshee* moaning sits.
They called, but at their call the more
I yelled and pricked the good steed sore,
Until I clattered through the Pass,
Like the resounding rocky mass
That, loosened from the mountain's cope,
Thunders down Knock-an-Affrin's slope.†
Then swifter swifter sped he on,
O'er bank and brake and clattering stone,
With mighty overwhelming force,
Showering the blossoms from the gorse,
Tearing the greensward's fretted woof
In thunder with his iron hoof ;
Still on resistless fierce and fast,
Till out we dashed by Knocknaree,
Where dwelt Sir John de Prendergast,
For years my father's enemy.

* Banshee, a woman from the fairy hills, who wails for the dead, or for those about to die. See p. 73. The name "Brone" means sorrow.

† Knock-an-affrin, the "Hill of the Mass," where open-air Masses were celebrated in the times of the Penal Laws; one of the highest of the Cumberagh Mountains. See Joyce's Irish Names of Places, vol. i., p. 119.

VIII.

What saw I by that hostile hold
Within a green glade of the wold ?
A little maiden fair and bright,
Mounted upon a palfrey white ;
Her face by golden sunbeams kissed,
A goss-hawk on her slender wrist ;
A small page at her bridle-rein,
With long bright plume of yellow stain ;
Beside them two young wolf-hounds grey,
Upon the cool green grass at play.
One glimpse I had, and only one,
As doubly mad I thundered on,
To mark the look of wild surprise
And pity in her large grey eyes.

IX.

Away with lightning speed once more
Towards the great moor of Ballandore,
That dreary waste of trembling reeds
And marshes, where the wild duck feeds ;
Where o'er the deep pools, black and dim,
The grassy eskers* seem to swim,—
Away, till dell and dingle passed,
Like th' arrow from the arbalast,
We tore through splashing mire and scrog,
And plunged, half swallowed, in the bog.
Then turned the sweltering steed around,
With dripping breast and mane,
And stamped once more the solid ground,
And clanged his bridle rein.

* Esker, a little sand-hill.

X.

Ha ! was it thunder from the Pass
That smote mine ear,
Loud rolling o'er the brown morass,
With sound of fear ?
No ; 'twas the vengeful battle-cry
That came in that fierce peal,
With the gun's loud volley rolling by,
And the ringing clash of steel.
Like the autumnal thunder knell
That shakes the mountains hoar,
From lowland base to highland fell,
It rose in one wild roar ;
Then the gloomy marsh and the forest dell
And the heavens were still once more.

XI.

My heart swelled in my troubled breast,
Loud throbbing with a wild unrest ;
Bitterly did the tear-drops rise,
And burn within mine aching eyes ;
For much I feared that slogan yell
Might be my gallant father's knell.
Once more I shook the bridle free,
And bounded back towards Knocknaree,
Past the sweet spot where I had seen
The maiden in the glade of green,
Till up, with arrowy speed agen,
I clattered into Brona's Glen.

XII.

Ah ! well might Brone the Banshee tear
Her shadowy robe and streaming hair,
And raise her unavailing cries,
All mournful to the breezy skies

For there, most foully murdered, lay
My father, freres, and men that day !
And there, above my father's corse,—
Horror struck, bending from his horse,
I found Sir John de Prendergast ;
Moaning, while tears were falling fast—
My sire's firm friend long long ago,
But now for many a year his foe,
The father of the sylvan maid
I saw within the forest glade.

XIII.

With rage and grief I scarce had breath
To tax him with my father's death,
To brandish high that glittering knife,
And challenge him to mortal strife.
Sadly he looked down on his foe
Upon the bloody turf laid low,
Sadly he smiled at my wild wrath—
He saw me crazed with rage and woe,
And deigned me neither word nor blow—
But turned him silent down the path
With labouring breast and hollow groan,
And left me with the dead, alone.

XIV.

I looked upon my murdered sire,
Low lying in the gore and mire ;
I looked upon my brothers brave,
Each grasping still his broken glaive,
And with a ringing shriek of dread
Up the wild vale of Brone I fled,
Till with commingled fear and hate
Mad yelling, shot I through the gate
On that great horse, in dust and foam,
And brought the direful tidings home.

XV.

Woe ! woe ! the keeners' cry,
How mournful it began !
Now dying low, now swelling high,
On the ears of the gathered clan ;—
Woe ! woe ! my mother's wail,
And my sisters' grief and fear,
And the look of the dead, so still and pale,
Each on his sable bier ;
Eleven corpses in the hall,
And my mad freak the cause of all.
I cursed that fairy, so that he
From that fatal morn ne'er came to me ;
I cursed those heroes grim and old,
And their shades did I never again behold ;
I cursed myself, and that dark ravine,
Where the murderers slew my kith and kin ;
But the murderers never a curse I gave,—
I left them all for the lance and glaive.

XVI.

The suns of five long years had burned
O'er widow, sisters, son and clan,
And the light of health to mine eyes returned—
I'd grown a tall and stalwart man ;
Spearing the salmon in the floods,
Hunting the grim wolf through the woods,
The dun deer up the mountain track,
Fighting in many a bold attack—
And, comrades, by the blessed sun,
For many a mile there was not one
Could manage the battle charger free,
Or handle the heavy lance with me !

XVII.

In those five years, through peace or strife,
Why took I not my foeman's life ?

Why fell I not upon his clan,
Nor slew them all, both chief and man ?
You'll hear. Within the secret wood
I met that maiden fair and good—
The daughter of my father's foe
I'd seen upon that day of woe.
She loved me earthly things above,
I loved her with an equal love ;
And often, when the winds were bland,
And flowers were blooming o'er the land,
We met within the forest bower
For many a blissful secret hour,—
Or by the streamlet's vocal shore,
And told our love-vows o'er and o'er.
'The chief himself and all his clan—
Them I avoided—every man,
Lest memory of the direful past,
Might break the bonds of love at last
And hurl me on De Prendergast.

XVIII.

Alas, that love must bow to hate,
That red revenge its ire must sate !
One day our bard had gathered all
Our warlike clan round Cloda's hall,
And spoke and told them, every one,
I was not like my father's son,
Else I had met my foeman stout,
And fought the bloody death feud out.

XIX.

Provoked at heart, with brow full black,
I threw my harness on my back,
Resolved my foeman's hold to sack,
And give it o'er to fire and wrack.
I mounted my battle-charger free,
And placed my lance beside my knee ;

High in the sun by Cloda's shore
I raised the banner of Le Poer.
Merrily on that river marge
Glittered the light on helm and targe ;
Merrily did the sunbeams strike
On the glancing points of sword and pike ;
Merrily did the war-pipes play ;
Yet my heart was sad as we marched away.

XX.

As we marched down through Brona's Glen
I made a vow unheard of men—
Whatever fortune happed that day,
De Prendergast I would not slay.

XXI.

Up for the storming of the gate
Rushed the fierce clan with hearts elate
That vengeance due had come at last
Upon our foe De Prendergast.
And there a welcome warm they got
Of molten pitch and leaden shot,
That laid their bodies many a row
The barbican's bloody gate below.
Then rose my hot blood boiling high,
And the light of battle lit mine eye
To see the sudden sally out,
The swaying onset stern and stout,
To hear the opposing clansmen shout,
And rattling steel and roaring rout ;
And—as a charger that from far
Hears the loud clangour of the war,
Neighs fierce and shrill, and in his might
Bursts through the thickest of the fight—
So rushed I up the castle height,
And raised the war-cry of my clan,
And stormed the stubborn barbican.

XXII.

Bloody were pike and partisan
When through the gateway rushed the clan ;
Bloody were axe and skene* and sword,
When 'cross the court-yard fast we poured,
Tumultuous as the mountain flood
That devastates some lowland wood.
My blood was hot, my rage unpent,
As first in that wild rush I went.
I saw my foeman 'mid the dead
Brandish a huge mace o'er his head ;
I marked his eye, so cold and stern,
Glitter like those the mountain ernet†
Casts savagely upon his prey
Down from his rock so steep and grey ;
I saw him strike three clansmen down
With his iron mace through helm and crown.
I thought upon my murdered sire
And rushed at him with eyes on fire ;
I smote him with my bloody sperthe,‡
And dashed him sorely to the earth ;
Heavy and deadly was the stroke,
His good steel basnet bar it broke,
And laid him on his back before
The archway of his castle door.
I placed my knee upon his breast,
And raised my skene on high—
When passion is strong and reason blind,
Our vows are scattered to the wind—
I raised the skene his life to take,
When the solid court-yard seemed to quake,
And I heard a sound like the sounds that break
From the wings of birds o'er the wild sea lake
When storms are in the sky.

* Skene, a knife, a dagger.

† Erne, an eagle.

‡ Sperthe or sparth, a sort of battle-axe.

I looked—and by the Holy Rood,
There 'mid that scene of wrath and blood,
My father's shade before me stood !

XXIII.

He raised his shadowy hand
Slowly and silently—
A strange weird look of stern command
In his eye as he gazed on me.
He spoke : his words were like the tone
Of runnels heard remote and lone
Through mountain woods—now strangely clear,
Now dying distant on the ear :—
“ Strike not ! ” he said ; “ for now I know
De Prendergast was ne'er my foe ;
True friends were we, long long ago,
Ere civil warfare's dire behest
With seeming hate filled either breast.
That day he singly strove to aid
And shield me 'gainst the ambuscade
Of him, my murderer—Macray,
The robber chieftain of Coumfay ! ”*

XXIV.

Down upon the gory sand
I dropped my dagger from my hand—
Thank Heaven ! it did not find a sheath
Within his heart who lay beneath.
I raised mine eyes to look upon
That awful shade again—'twas gone !—

* Coumfay or Coumfea, one of the highest of the Cummeragh Mountains, about eight miles directly south of Kilsheelan (railway station) on the Suir. It takes its name from a deep *Coom* or hollow at its base, with a lake at bottom. Coumfea lies two miles west of the better known lake of Coumshingawn.

The form that from my troubled sight
 Hid the wild turmoil of the fight ;
 The voice that from my spellbound ear
 Shut out the battle's sounds of fear !

XXV.

I sprang unto my feet, and back
 I turned my clan from the attack ;
 I stopped the battle's thundering din,
 And raised the chief and bore him in
 To the chamber where my long-loved maid
 For the souls departing prayed.
 There I placed De Prendergast—
 He and I were friends at last.
 Night came. When morning rose agen,
 Together through the mountain glen
 Up swift we marched, with sword and fire,
 And slew the murderers of my sire.
 And scarce one happy week was o'er
 When both our clans by Cloda's shore
 Gathered beneath the sun to see
 The plighting of my love and me.

THE COMING BRIDAL.

AIR: "B'fearr liomsa ainnir gan gúna."*

I.

My home stands by Funshion's† bright river,
 Where the broom blossoms shine in the spring,
 Where the green beeches murmur and quiver,
 And the birds 'mid their cool branches sing ;

* For which see Petrie's *Ancient Music of Ireland*, p. 52.

† Funshion, rising on Galtymore, and flowing by Mitchelstown, Glanworth, and Kilworth, joins the Blackwater a little below Fermoy.

And there, where the sky gleams so blue in
 The stream as it winds through the dells,
 Adown by the old castle ruin,
 My love in her white cottage dwells.

II.

The black whortle shines 'mid the heather,
 Where the wild deer in brown autumn rove,
 And dark is the strong raven's feather,
 But darker the locks of my love.
 Two trees by the Fort of the Fairy,*
 A red rose and white sweetly grow ;
 O, the lips and the brow of my Mary
 Outshine their pure crimson and snow.

III.

No flocks hath she down by the island,
 No red gold her coffers illume,
 No herds on the brown moor or highland,
 No meads where the flowers are in bloom.
 The old dame has herds by the wildwood ;
 She'd give me green meads, herds, and gold,
 But the young heart that loved me since childhood
 Shall find me in manhood unsold.

IV.

Next Sunday the fires will be blazing
 For the Baal-feast† o'er mountain and plain ;
 That morn village crowds will be gazing
 With joy on our gay bridal train ;
 Could love like our love ever falter,
 When placed 'mid the throng side by side,
 When there, at the old chapel altar,
 The good priest will make her my bride ?

* Fort of the Fairy : see page 26.

† At nightfall on the 23rd June—the eve of St. John's day—the people lighted fires and big straw *fockles* or torches in the open air, a remnant of the old fire festival in honour of the pagan god *Bél* or Baal. Also often on 1st May.

EILEEN OF THE GOLDEN HAIR.

I.

COME with me to Mora's bowers,
Far in wild Glenara's* dell,
Where the sunny sward with flowers
Glitters round the Fairy Well ;
Where the green leaves quiver o'er us
To the jocund summer air,
All things bright, and life before us,
Eileen of the golden hair.

II.

Darkness reigned within my bosom,
Shadow drear by sorrow cast ;
Thou hast set a blooming blossom,
In that desert land at last ;
Thou hast taught my soul to borrow
Hope—to banish bleak despair—
Hope that shows a bright to-morrow,
Eileen of the golden hair.

III.

Then away to Mora's bowers,
Deep in wild Glenara's dell ;
There we'll spend the summer hours,
Bound by love's bewitching spell :
Not a cloud shall linger o'er us—
Cloud of gloom or blighting care,—
All things bright, and life before us,
Eileen of the golden hair.

* Glenanaar: see p. 19.

SAINT STEPHEN'S NIGHT.*

I.

WITHOUT, the wild winds keenly blow
O'er weary wastes of wintry snow ;
Within, the red fire sheds its glow,
While round and round the dancers go.
 Then merrily, merrily, round and round,
 O, merrily, merrily, round and round,
 To the sweetest music in Ireland's ground,
 The heart's glad laugh and the bagpipe's sound.

II.

Now what befits Saint Stephen's Night
But loving words and glances bright,
But young and old, with main and might,
To dance around in wild delight ?
 Then merrily, merrily, round and round,
 O, merrily, merrily, round and round,
 To the sweetest music in Ireland's ground,
 The heart's glad laugh and the bagpipe's sound.

III.

There maid and matron, son and sire,
With bounding spirits that cannot tire,
Around the bright Saint Stephen's fire
All dance and joke to their hearts' desire.
 Then merrily, merrily, round and round,
 O, merrily, merrily, round and round,
 To the sweetest music in Ireland's ground,
 The heart's glad laugh and the bagpipe's sound.

* For the air, see Goodman's School and Home Song Book,
p. 72.

THE CANNON.

Time, 1745. AIR: "Barrack Hill."*

I.

WE are a roving company
Of soldiers brave and hearty ;
We never fought for golden fee,
For faction or for party ;
The will to make old Ireland free,
That set each dauntless man on
And banished us beyond the sea
With our brave iron cannon.
And here's the gallant company
That fought by Boyne and Shannon,
That never feared an enemy,
With our brave iron cannon !

II.

I've brought a wreath of shamrocks here,
In memory of our own land,—
'Tis withered like that island drear,—
That sorrowful and lone land ;
I'll hang it nigh our cannon's mouth,
To whet our memories fairly,
And there's no flower in all the south
Could deck that gun so rarely.
And here's the gallant company
That soon shall rush each man on,
And plough the Saxon enemy
With our brave iron cannon !

III.

'Tis dinted well from mouth to breech
With many a battle furrow ;
A fitting sermon it will preach
At Fontenoy to-morrow.

* For which see the Stanford-Petrie Collection of Irish Music, No. 926.

Then never let your spirits sink,
But stand around, each man on
This foreign slope, and we will drink
One brave health to our cannon !
And here's the gallant company
That always forward ran on
So boldly 'gainst the enemy,
With our brave iron cannon !

O, FAIR SHINES THE SUN ON GLENARA.*

I.

O, FAIR shines the sun on Glenara,
And calm rest his beams on Glenara ;
But there is a light
Far dearer, more bright,
Illumines my soul in Glenara,
The light of thine eyes in Glenara.

II.

And sweet sings the stream of Glenara,
Glancing down through the woods like an arrow ;
But a sound far more sweet
Glads my heart when we meet
In the green summer woods of Glenara, —
Thy voice by the wave of Glenara.

III.

May it ever be thus in Glenara,
Till we two become one in Glenara ;
May thy voice sound as free
And as kindly to me,
And thine eyes beam as bright in Glenara,
In the green summer woods of Glenara !

* Glenanaar : see note, p. 19.

THE LINNET.

I.

I've found a comrade free and gay,
A linnet of the wildwood tree ;
We hold sweet converse day by day,
My heart, my rambling soul, and he.
He sits upon the blossomed spray
Within the hollow haunted dell,
And every song-note seems to say
That wild bird knows and loves me well.
Sweet linnet, still sing merrily,
Beside the glittering streamlet's shore,
For love-bright dreams thou bring'st to me
Of Rosaleen for evermore.

II.

As I lie in my waking dreams,
And dreamy thoughts successive rise,
Down from the blooming bough he seems
To look on me with human eyes ;
And then he sings, — ah, such a song
Will ne'er be heard while seasons roll,
Save Rosaleen's voice, that all day long
In memory charms my heart and soul.
Sweet linnet, still sing merrily
Beside the haunted streamlet's shore,
For many a dream thou bring'st to me
Of Rosaleen for evermore.

III.

If souls e'er visit earth again,
With one my little friend's possessed ;
Each dulcet wild Elysian strain
Springs so divinely from his breast.

Those fairy songs—that earnest look—
Some minstrel's sprite it sure must be,—
Anacreon's soul, or hers who took
The love-leap by the Grecian sea.*
Sweet linnet, still sing merrily
Beside the murmuring streamlet's shore,
For happy dreams thou bring'st to me
Of Rosaleen for evermore.

THE JOY-BELLS.

I.

BLITHESOME is our marriage morning ;
Blithesome are our hearts and gay,
No gems or gold our dress adorning ;
Though we've neither pomp nor sway ;
And the joy-bells' constant ringing
Floats upon the mountain wind,
Ringing, ringing, sweetly bringing
Many a glad thought to my mind.
O, the joy-bells! Happy joy-bells!
Ringing, ringing sweet and clear,
In the May-time of our loving,
And the May-tide of the year.

II.

This small chapel by the mountain
For our bridal's fittest place,
With its fairy thorn and fountain,
And its old familiar face ;

* Sappho, the Greek poetess, who threw herself over the Leucadian cliff in her despairing love for Phaon.

With the grey priest vested meetly,
 Like a saint from Heaven above ;
 With our parents smiling sweetly
 On our deep and deathless love.
 O, the joy-bells ! Happy joy-bells !
 Ringing, ringing sweet and clear,
 In the May-time of our loving,
 And the May-tide of the year.

III.

Once the golden *Mee-na-malla**
 With its sunny hours is o'er,
 Grief may come but peace must follow
 While I'm on my husband's floor :
 For my Donall loves me kindly,
 And though love the judgment dim,
 'Twas but slow, and 'twas not blindly
 That I gave my heart to him.
 O, the joy-bells ! Happy joy-bells !
 Ringing, ringing sweet and clear,
 In the May-time of our loving,
 And the May-tide of the year.

 THE HAPPY CHRISTMAS DAYS LONG AGO.†

AIR: "Ulachán Duiv O!"‡

I.

WITH sad silent tears, through the dim mist of years,
 I look to the days long ago,
 To the gay happy time when with song, jest, and rhyme
 We sat by the fire's ruddy glow ;

* Honeymoon : Irish *Mi-na-meala*.

† By "Christmas Days" here, the author means the days about Christmas time.

‡ For which see Joyce's *Irish Music and Song*, p. 38.

When the eyes that shine no more shone around the
 blithe hearth
 Of the homestead far away in the land of my birth,
 And the brown rafters rang to the music and mirth
 Of the happy Christmas days long ago.

II.

From Seefin's guardian hill* there's a bright murm'ring
 rill,
 Dancing down to the vale of Glenroe ;
 There's a wood smiling fair and a grey castle there,
 And a once happy homestead laid low ;
 My blessing on that home and the hours of delight,
 With my friends around its hearth each gay festive
 night,
 With the eyes of those I loved shining on me fond and
 bright,
 In the happy Christmas days long ago.

III.

O ! Heaven be with the day, when with hearts young
 and gay,
 We longed for the blithe Christmas snow
 To cast its mantle white from the hill's towering height
 O'er the wide fields and valleys below ;
 In each sad exiled heart fond the mem'ry remains
 Of the Christmas candle's light in the glowing window
 panes ;†
 Of the feasting and the dancing to the piper's merry
 strains,
 In the happy Christmas days long ago.

* Seefin Mountain over Glenosheen : see p. 81. Glenroe Valley,
 between Kilfinane and Mitchelstown : p. 74.

† Candles burning in windows : see p. 25.

THE BRIDGE OF GLANWILLAN.*

I.

THOUGH the linnets sing sweet from the wildwood,
Young Kathleen no blithe warbling hears,
And the warm wind that plays o'er the moorland
Can ne'er dry her fast-falling tears ;
And though gay laughs the sunlight around her,
Still her heart is all sad and forlorn
As she sits by the ford of Glenara†
Awaiting her Dermot's return ;
For he's gone to the fray with his kindred,
The hard-riding clansmen of Mourne.

II.

"There are blood spots full thick on thy charger,
There are blood marks deep red on thy mail,—
Have ye news, have ye news from the battle,
Tired horseman so gory and pale?—
Were you at the bridge of Glanwillan,
And saw you my love in the fray?"
"A curse on that bridge!" cried the horseman,
"There the Irish have conquered to-day!"
Then he dashed through the bright gleaming river,
And away o'er the moorland, away

III.

"There's a smile on thy face, gallant horseman,
Who sweep'st like the wind to the ford,
On thy steed steams the fresh foam of battle,
And the blood stains are wet on thy sword ;

* "The Bridge of Glanwillan" is the bridge that spans the Blackwater at Killawillin, five miles east of (or below) Mallow.

† Glenara, Glenanaar. The ford across the river here (now spanned by Ballintlea Bridge—the "Big Bridge") is about eight miles north from Killawillin. For Glenanaar, see p. 19.

O, were you at the bridge of Glanwillan ? ”
 With a wild cry of anguish she prayed :
 Reining up with a splash in the water,
 His hot steaming charger he stayed, —
 “ Yes, I’ve news from the bridge of Glanwillan,
 Brave news for old Ireland, fair maid.”

IV.

“ O, stay thee, brave horseman, I pray thee,
 And tell how the foeman came down ;
 Did he drive the good preys from the valleys,
 And burn every hamlet and town ?
 On the narrow red bridge of Glanwillan
 Did my Dermot ride front with the best ? ” —
 On his brow shone a bright smile of triumph,
 Like the sunlight on Houra’s wild crest,
 As the tale of that morning’s fierce battle
 He told at the fair maid’s behest.

V.

But first he glared over the moorland,
 Where the heathbells laugh bright in the sun,
 And shook his red sword at the foeman,
 Who wounded and weary toiled on : —
 “ ’Twas down from the green sloping mountain
 We first saw the foemen’s array,*

* The Irish were posted on the slope of one of the Nagles’ Mountains, over the Blackwater, and overlooking “ Glanwillan ” (also called Glannagear : “ Glen of the berries ”), the beautiful “ Glan ” or Glen of the Ross river (joining the Blackwater at Killawillin), from which they saw the enemy approaching from the north, at the other side of the Blackwater. They then moved down the slope, lay in wait at the south or Killawillin end of the bridge, and fell on the raiders in the act of crossing.

Riding forth with high hearts to the foray,
On the broad smoking plain far away.
Dhar Dhee !* like the corn sheaves of autumn,
By the bridge lie their corpses to-day.

VI.

“ With a jangling of scabbards and bridles
We dashed down to the broad Avonmore,
Where the long narrow bridge of Glanwillan
Spans the brown tide from steep shore to shore :
And there in the green blooming forest
We halted our ranks on the glade,
And each rider looked close to his pistols,
And loosened his long gleaming blade ;
Like a bright wall of steel in the sunlight
We stood for the foemen arrayed.

VII.

“ You could hear the shrill whine of the otter
As he quested his prey by the shore ;
You could hear the brown trout in the shallow
Splash up from the wave evermore ;
So still we awaited their coming,
Though each heart for the fight throbbed full fain,
Till we saw through the greenwoods advancing
Their line like a long serpent train,
Till the psalm-singing troopers of Cromwell
Poured down o’er the causeway amain.

VIII.

“ ’Twas then like the storm-cloud of autumn
That rolls over Barna’s wild crest,
When its thunder clangs hoarse through the gorges,
And the lightnings leap out from its breast,

* An oath: Irish, *Dar Dia*.

With our loud ringing slogan of battle
On their thick-serried squadrons we bore,
With a flashing of helmets and sabres,
And a rattling of matchlocks galore,
Till the fresh green was strewn with their corpses,
And the causeway was slippery with gore.

IX.

“There I rode side by side on the causeway,
With your true-love so gallant and leal,
As he charged 'mongst the foremost and bravest,
In his morion and bright jack of steel.
I could hear the loud clang of his horse-hoofs,
As he swept o'er the red bridge's crown,
And many a bold Saxon trooper
'Neath the sweep of his long sword went down.
This day for thy Dermot of Mourne
Is a bright day of deathless renown.

X.

“Then weep not, fair maid, by Glenara ;
In triumph thy love will return,
His plume waved to-day 'midst the foremost
Of the hard-riding clansmen of Mourne.
His name shall be sacred among us,
And a watchword in foray and fray !”
Then that fierce clansman glared o'er the moorland,
As the wolf looketh out for his prey,
And he dashed through the ford like an arrow
On the track of his foeman away.

THE BANKS OF ANNER.*

AIR: "Cold and rough the north wind blows."†

I.

IN purple robes old Slievenamon
Towers monarch of the mountains,
The first to catch the smiles of dawn
With all his woods and fountains ;—
His streams dance down by tower and town,
But none since Time began her
Met mortal sight so pure and bright
As winding wandering Anner.

II.

In hillside gleam or woodland gloom,
O'er fairy height and hollow,
Upon the banks gay flowerets bloom
Where'er her course I follow.
And halls of pride tower o'er her tide,
And gleaming bridges span her,
As, laughing gay, she winds away,
The gentle murmuring Anner.

III.

There gallant men, for freedom born,
With friendly grasp will meet you ;
There lovely maids as bright as morn
With sunny smiles will greet you ;
And there they strove the Red above
To raise Green Ireland's banner—
There yet its fold they'll see unrolled
Upon the banks of Anner.

* The Anner flowing from Slievenamon, joins the Suir near Clonmel.

† For which see Joyce's "Ancient Irish Music," p. 55.

IV.

May Heav'n be with the good old days,
 The days so light and airy,
 When to blithe friends I sang my lays
 In gallant gay Tipperary ;
 When fair maids' sighs and witching eyes
 Made my young heart the planner
 Of castles rare built in the air,
 Upon the banks of Anner.

V.

The morning sun may fail to show
 His light, the earth illuming ;
 Old Slievenamon to blush and glow
 In autumn's purple blooming ;
 The shamrock green no more be seen,
 And breezes cease to fan her,
 Ere I forget the friends I met
 Upon the banks of Anner.

 YOU'RE A DEAR LAND TO ME.

AIR : " 'The Blackbird.' " *

I.

THERE'S a stream in Glenlara, † whose silvery fountain
 Leaps up into life where the heather-bells bloom,
 That steals through the moorland and winds round the
 mountain,
 Now laughing in sunlight now weeping in gloom ;

* For which see Joyce's *Old Irish Folk Music and Songs*.

† Glenlara, a fancy name for Glenosheen ; see p. 99.

And by its merry dancing, a rural sight entrancing,
From out the greenwood glancing, my home you once
could see ;
Now an exile far away from that home I sigh and say,—
O, green-hilled pleasant Erin, you're a dear land to me.*

II.

There's a tree by that streamlet in bright beauty shining,
With green leaves and blossoms all brilliant and gay,
With the birds on its branches wild melodies twining,
Where I sat with my friends on each blithe summer
day,
When the sunset clouds were glowing and the gentle kine
were lowing,
And the perfumed airs were blowing around that
blooming tree ;
Tree or friends I'll ne'er see more by that murmuring
streamlet's shore,
O, green-hilled pleasant Erin, you're a dear land to me.

THE WATERFALL.

I.

WHERE the moss-bronzed oaks are towering
By the rude rock's hoary wall,
Into a chasm with sudden spasm
Rusheth the waterfall :
Breaking its prison thrall,
Bursting its rocky bar,
Its voice rolls loud from the bright spray cloud,
Over the hills afar.

* Meaning, according to the idiom, that he *paid dearly* for his devotion to Ireland.

II.

All through the flame-browed summer
'Twas but a tiny stream :
Brown autumn gave the swelling wave,
And the fierce and fiery gleam.
O wanderer, you would deem
That a bright-eyed monster there
Rushed out on thee with a roar of glee,
Wild from his forest lair.

III.

It springeth far in the uplands,
That torrent swift and rude,
And rolls along with its ancient song
Through the deep solitude ;
Then between sedgy banks,
Down from the rugged clift,
With a sudden sweep it taketh its leap
Into that caverned rift.

IV.

It boils and writhes and hisses
As it leapeth down amain,
And its deaf'ning roar shakes the mountain hoar
Like a Titan's yell of pain.
Then darting on again
Swiftly its brown waves go,
Winding away in their rippling play.
Through the widening vales below.

TO A BIRD.

I.

WHENCE art thou, O delightful bird,
That sittest on the leafy bough ?
Thy cheery note, so long unheard,
My sad soul calms and smooths my brow.
What sunny climes hast thou explored,
What wide seas' foam, what deserts' dearth,
Since first thy wings resplendent soared
Up from thy native spot of earth ?

II.

Thou need'st not at my greeting start,
For, comrade, I'll ne'er work thee harm,
Or fright thy little trusting heart,
Or spoil thy wing's refulgent charm.
Whence comest thou, O minstrel gay ?
Perchance far far beyond the foam
Thou sat'st upon the wildwood spray
To sing beside my native home.

III.

O comrade of the tuneful craft,
Could I but dream a song like thine,
I'd sing how summer breezes waft
Their perfumes round that spot :—how twine
The sweetbrier and the woodland rose
Through that blithe vale, my song should tell,
And how like wreaths of feathery snows
The hawthorn hedge blooms up the dell.

IV.

Deep in my soul thy heavenly strain
Lights one great flash of memory ;
I see that valley green again,
The rural home and guardian tree.

The purple hill, the spreading wold,
 The ruined tower and village spire,
 Meadow and streamlet, as of old,
 Bathed in the level sunset fire.

V.

I hear the ringdove from the wood
 Coo to his mate with plaintive call,
 The skylark from his golden cloud,
 The murmuring of the waterfall;
 The merry milkmaid's roundelay,
 The airy ploughboy's whistle keen,
 The children at their jocund play
 Around the hawthorn on the green.

VI.

And those blithe friends of life's young day
 Who danced beneath that blooming tree,
 O minstrel, tell me where are they,
 And have they all forgotten me?
 Farewell! Thou spread'st thy shining wing
 To visit isles beyond the foam.
 Thou'rt gone—and where? Perchance to sing
 My memory into hearts at home.

THE OAKS OF HOURS.*

I.

O, think of the days when the crags' rugged masses
 Looked o'er one great forest in Hours's wild passes,
 When the grey wolf preyed fiercely by woodland and
 mountain,
 And the red deer ran free by the swift torrent's shore,
 When the peasant was king of his home by the fountain,
 And welcomed the trav'ller with smiles at his door.

* Hours, the Ballyhours Mountains between Cork and Limerick.

II.

T'was a brave time—a free time—the hills seem to mourn
Till the splendour of glade and of forest return ;

Yet is there not splendour as grand and as shaggy,
Where the huge twisted roots of that forest remain,
Wide spread o'er each deep cave and precipice craggy,
Sending scions of strength to the blue sky again ?

III.

In bright Lyre-na-grena* where the blue stream is flowing,
And in dark Lyre-na-freaghaun those scions are growing :
They spring from the streams and they tower from the
ledges

Of the huge rocks that frown o'er the lone fairy dells ;
Like young guardian giants encircling the edges
Of the deep silent pools and the moss-wreathèd wells.

SONG OF SARFIELD'S TROOPER.†

AIR: "Ye Natives of this Nation."‡

I.

THE night fell dark on Limerick and all the land was
still,

As for the foe in ambush we lay beside the hill ;
Long impatiently we waited to rush upon our prey,
With noble Sarsfield at our head before the break of day.
From Dublin came the foeman, with deadly warlike store—
Huge guns with tons of powder and thund'ring balls galore

* Lyre-na-grena, the "Glen of the Sun," "Sunny Glen," at the south-east side of Seefin Mountain (rising straight over Glenosheen). Lyre-na-freaghaun, the "Glen of the *hurts* or whortleberries," at the north-west side of the same mountain.

† Commemorates the destruction of King William's siege train by Sarsfield (1690), which is told in more detail in the ballad at p. 11. Read the introductory note at that page.

‡ For which see Joyce's *Old Irish Folk Music and Songs*.

But little was he dreaming that there to work his bale,
We'd come with our commander bold from dark Slieve
Felim's Vale.

II.

At the lonely hour of midnight each man leaped on his
steed,
Down moor and vale to Cullen we dashed with lightning
speed ;
Then eagerly we galloped to Ballyneety's wall,
Where lay our foe's encampment with guns and stores
and all.
“ Give the word ! ” — “ The word is Sarsfield, and Sarsfield
is the man :
And here I am ! ” our general cried, as down on them we
ran ;
Then God He cleared the firmament, the moon and stars
gave light,
And for the battle of the Boyne we had revenge that
night.*

III.

When the convoy all were scattered we took their mighty
store,
Pontoons and carts and powder casks and cannons by the
score ;
And hastily with eager hands we piled them up on high,
Laid down the fuse—applied the match—and blew them
to the sky !
How pleasant laughed our general as fast we rode away ;
And many a health we drank to him in Limerick next
day :
Here's another health to Sarsfield, who in that midnight
hour,
Destroyed the foe's artillery by Ballyneety's tower.

* This spirited couplet is from an old folk song on the same
subject, fragments of which still remain among the peasantry :
see p. 12 above.

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